

Giuliani, Hillary, and the Shock Troops of Art
JED PERL

THE NEW REPUBLIC

October 18, 1999

PAT BUCHANAN'S
HITLER FIXATION

GORE GETS THE MESSAGE

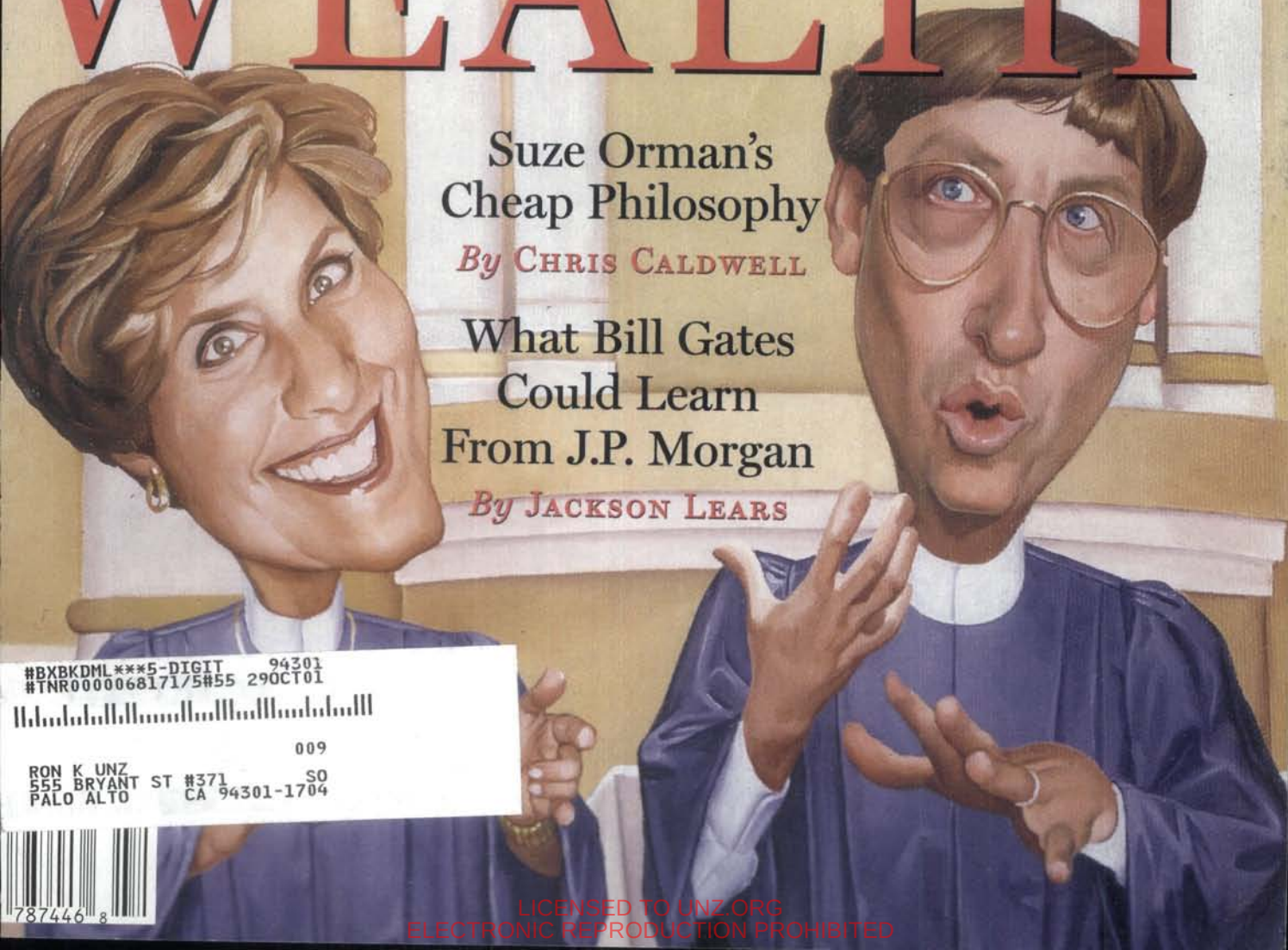
The New Gospel of WEALTH

Suze Orman's
Cheap Philosophy

By CHRIS CALDWELL

What Bill Gates
Could Learn
From J.P. Morgan

By JACKSON LEARS



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WASHINGTON, D.C.

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A matter of fact

TO THE EDITORS:

Jonathan Zimmerman's "Relatively Speaking" (September 6) facetiously equates teaching multiple cultural perspectives with teaching both evolution and creationism. The question that is the subject of the theories of evolution and creationism—how biological species have come to be—is a question of fact, and most people would agree that any proposed answer must be objectively correct, incorrect, or some combination of the two. What makes the question difficult is that its answer can be arrived at only by inference from observable data that do not directly address it.

Questions of culture are different because, except for people who feel they have a direct pipeline to a supernatural arbiter, answering them involves opinion and belief. There is no inconsistency, much less hypocrisy, in objecting to teaching creationism as a scientific theory—a desperate effort to force uncooperative data to fit into a predetermined conclusion—while advocating teaching tolerance for a diversity of opinions on cultural issues.

HARVEY N. BOCK
Highland Park, Illinois

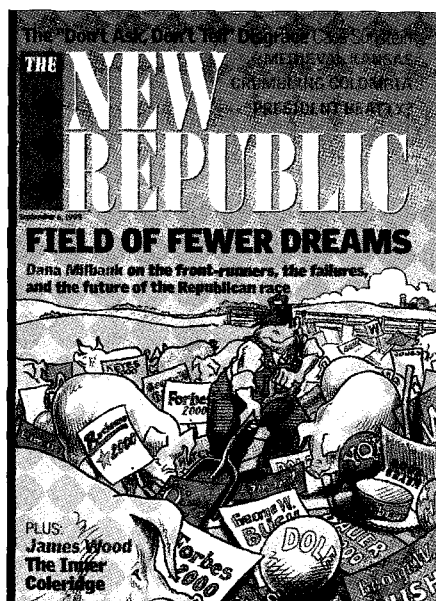
TO THE EDITORS:

Jonathan Zimmerman's article betrays a serious misconception about the proper role of science. By advocating that children make up their own minds about what the "right" side of a scientific issue is, the author subtly reinforces the creationists' claims of equal footing for the teaching of the creation myth alongside the scientific theories of evolution and the origin of the universe.

In contrast to moral or ethical issues, scientific theories leave little room for opinion. Does Zimmerman really suggest that, after being taught the operational principles of a transistor or the Big Bang theory, a person could contemplate them and then reasonably decide that either is wrong?

Certainly, other Einsteins occasionally come around who conceive of theories that replace or extend those previously held, but the hard truth about science is that most of today's theories have been developed over many decades—if not centuries—of intellectual work, have been thoroughly tested, and have no realistic conceptual alternatives. Science does not really allow for the existence of many equivalent viewpoints that merit equal discussion time.

PAOLO DOBRILLA
Woodland Park, Colorado



Title trouble

TO THE EDITORS:

I was pleased to see my contribution published in the September 27 issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC—but not to discover that it had appeared under the title "Should the SAT Account for Race? Yes." If it had been up to me to choose a headline, this is not the one I would have picked, since it does not accurately reflect my actual position, which is that university administrators, state legislatures, and even regents formally opposed to the use of race will find some way of keeping up the numbers of minority students, with or without assistance from the SAT. I took no position on whether the SAT "should" or "should not" account for race.

NATHAN GLAZER
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Nuclear presence

TO THE EDITORS:

Patrick Clawson's conclusion in "Stealth Bombing" (September 6)—that the United States needs to support the Iraqi opposition in overthrowing Saddam Hussein—is most welcome. America's Middle East experts have lagged behind certain national security figures in advocating such a course. But, as someone consulted by a TNR fact-checker for this article, I would like to point out a major error.

Clawson claimed that the end of the presence of U.N. weapons inspectors (UNSCOM) in Iraq was "no great loss," while "Saddam's nuclear and missile programs are somewhat more vulnerable to detection and destruction now, because they require such large facilities that spy satellites will be able to detect them." That is not necessarily so. During the Gulf war, the

United States did not know about Iraq's main nuclear weapons manufacturing center and did not target it. Moreover, Iraq's nuclear program is, in significant respects, more advanced now than it was at that point. After the August 1995 defection of Saddam's son-in-law Hussein Kamil, who had overseen Iraq's unconventional weapons programs, it was discovered that Iraq's nuclear program had continued after the war and that Iraqi scientists had solved the problem of designing a bomb small enough to fit on a missile. Thus, all Iraq needed to make a nuclear bomb was the fissile material. And, if Iraq managed to get such material, the weapons-fabrication facility to turn it into a bomb would be small—undetectable by satellite.

Clawson wrote only about inspections, failing to mention UNSCOM's monitoring of Iraq's large industrial base. Dual-use equipment was tagged and regularly checked to insure that it had not been diverted for proscribed purposes. The equipment for shaping the core of nuclear bombs was monitored while UNSCOM was there but is not any longer. The same is true about Iraq's missile program. Iraq is allowed to have limited-range "defensive" missiles. While UNSCOM was in Iraq, it could ensure that the country's declared facilities were not being used to build longer-range missiles. But who can tell now?

Saddam's determination to retain chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs even in the face of punitive economic sanctions should be a matter of concern, particularly with UNSCOM's presence ended. Had Clawson accurately described the danger, his argument for supporting the Iraqi opposition would have been more compelling and the bankruptcy of present U.S. policy would have been clearer.

LAURIE MYLROIE
*Publisher, Iraq News
Washington, D.C.*

PATRICK CLAWSON REPLIES:

Laurie Mylroie is correct that, if Iraq got hold of fissile material, it could produce a nuclear bomb in a small facility not detectable by satellite. Inspections would do little to solve this problem, because the facility needed would be so small that it could be hidden from any conceivable inspections regime. (Also, the necessary equipment is compact enough to be readily smuggled in.) This is one of the reasons the U.S. government puts such a high priority on its program with the former Soviet states to prevent diversion of fissile material. ■

Even Drug War Advocates Agree: Mandatory Minimum Sentencing is Bad!



Stephen G. Breyer, Supreme Court Justice

"Mandatory sentencing laws should be abolished."

Source: United States Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer, in a speech at the University of Nebraska College, November 20, 1998.

Barry B. McCaffrey, "Drug Czar"

" - mandatory sentencing ties the hands of judges too tightly and prevents them from exercising discretion and good judgment." "By revising these sentencing rules, our intent is to broaden support for our drug policies, restore respect for the law and foster a more effective division of responsibility between federal, state and local law enforcement."

Source: Prepared Remarks by Barry R. McCaffrey, director, Office of National Drug Control Policy Before the First Annual Criminal Justice and Substance Abuse Conference, Albany, New York, June 29, 1999.

Joseph A. Califano, Jr., President, CASA

" Laws that prescribe mandatory sentences for possession of small amounts of marijuana are overkill. In general, mandatory sentences, especially those requiring drug and alcohol abusers and addicts to serve their entire sentence, are counterproductive. We need all the carrots and sticks we can muster to help these individuals shake their habit. Mandatory sentences take away any potential that an early release might hold as an incentive for such an inmate to enter treatment. Such sentences also remove the leverage that parole offers to get recently released inmates to continue treatment and aftercare or face a return to prison."

Source: Joseph A. Califano, Jr. Chairman and President, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University on release of Non-Medical Marijuana: Rite of Passage or Russian Roulette? July 1999.

Let Judges Judge. Let's not tie their hands.

Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President
703-354-5694, 703-354-5695 (fax), info@csdp.org, www.csdp.org

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Swoon Song

A FEELING IS building up inside me, and, rather than continue trying to keep it to myself, rather than deny it any further, I think it's time finally to open up and discuss it publicly. I didn't want this to happen. I know it shouldn't be happening. But it is: I'm falling for John McCain, the former POW and current senator from Arizona who finally made his presidential candidacy official on September 27.

Thus, I join the ranks of the largest and most dewy-eyed media fan club toglom on to any presidential candidate, real or wished-for, since the great swoon over Colin Powell in 1995. I hate myself for being a part of this pack—for exhibiting so little originality or independence. My family and friends might disown me for succumbing, even tentatively, to the allure of a Republican, and a pretty conservative one at that. But the guy is running such a terrific campaign, speaking so forthrightly about so many matters of real substance, that I just find him irresistible.

And I'm not even talking about the issue that has won McCain the uncritical attention of so many other pundits: campaign finance reform. I couldn't care less about his quixotic campaign to abolish soft money donations, partly because I think this ostensible anti-corruption drive is actually questionable in terms of its impact on free speech, and partly because I think it's just futile. Rather, what impresses me most about McCain is that he is the only candidate who has, so far, articulated a tough-minded and morally robust approach to foreign policy. Sure, maybe I trust him more on these matters because there's something about a man who used to be in uniform. But even adjusted for the ex-POW-and-son-and-grandson-of-admirals effect, his ideas would be the best anyone's put forth so far.

I guess I began falling for McCain's foreign policy during the Kosovo crisis, when he stood up in the Senate in favor of giving President Clinton the option to

use ground troops. This position was not only vindicated by events (Milosevic capitulated only when NATO seemed to be turning from an air-only war to a ground attack), but taking it was a real political risk for McCain. Polls showed the American public deeply ambivalent about the idea, and he was both bucking his party and pushing a reluctant White House. But McCain did it because he understood that American values and interests demanded that we stop mass murder in the Balkans and stabilize Europe and that these were values and interests worth fighting and dying for.

At a time when politicians, including the president, routinely shrink from the very idea that any American should ever die in war, no matter how worthy the cause, McCain's stand was gutsy. This is one Vietnam vet—indeed, one who suffered terribly himself in that war—who doesn't have a case of Vietnam Syndrome. McCain understands this central lesson of the twentieth century: the supposed dichotomy between pursuing our values and pursuing our interests is a false one. As he put it in a superb August 24 speech to the World Affairs Council of Northern California, "For the United States, values and interests are inextricably linked, and, traditionally, American leaders have designed policies to serve both ends." McCain correctly identifies the Achilles' heel of Clinton foreign policy as "self-doubt"—too often this administration acts as if it needs to ask other nations' pardon for doing what is manifestly right and justified, such as bombing Saddam Hussein's Iraq or challenging North Korea over its dangerous nuclear program.

He is the only candidate to have evinced appropriate disgust at the moral hand-wringing of a Democratic administration seemingly uncomfortable with the idea that American power is, and historically has been, a force for good in the world. In the same speech, he lamented the fact that "the president often spends a portion of his overseas visits apologizing for one or another American transgression against the host country." He added that "a world where our ideals had a realistic chance of becoming a universal creed was our principle object in this century" and should be in the next.

As the administration tinkers with the details of its "containment" plans for the Persian Gulf and endeavors to sweeten its appeasement package for the Stalinists in Pyongyang, McCain boldly calls for a policy of "rollback" toward rogue states such as Iraq and North Korea. With regard to China, McCain wisely advocates drawing a line in the Taiwan Strait, on the sound principle that only a clear American signal to Beijing to back off will ensure that

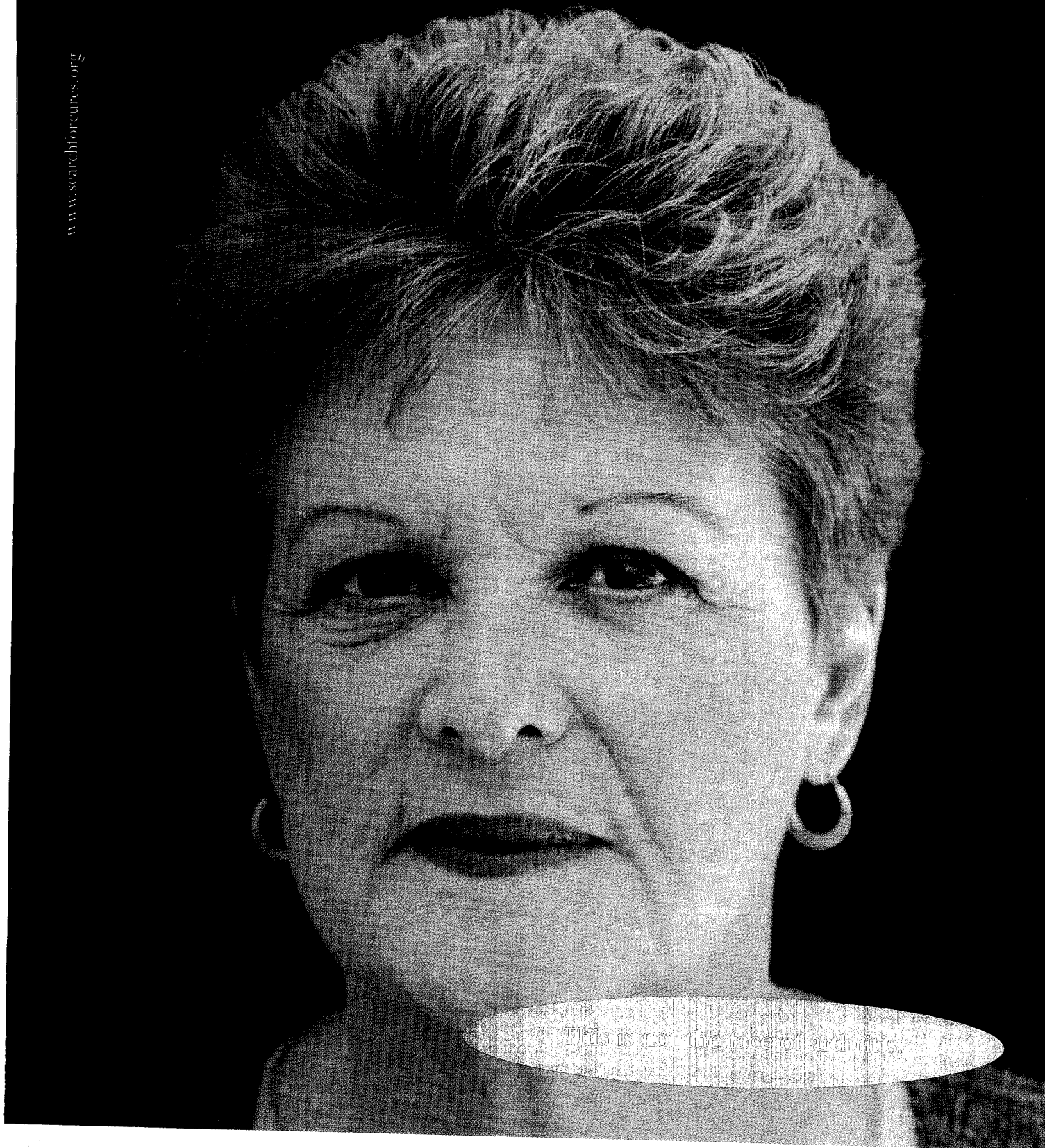
China never starts a war over the island. "Engagement is not surrender," he says. "In our pursuit of a strategic partnership with China we have spent more time wondering how to couch our diplomacy in language that won't give offense to Beijing than we have making clear the force of our opposition to China's increasing assertiveness in disputed territorial questions in Asia. Isn't the point of our relationship with China to maintain international stability, protect our security and encourage political reforms? The relationship is not an end in itself."

McCain has explicitly attacked the rank isolationism that is rampant both in his party and in the leftmost precincts of the Democratic Party. Perhaps more impressively, he has at least implicitly sketched an argument against the "realism" that appears to be gaining ground in the George W. Bush camp (and which, along with Bush's own inexperience in such matters, probably accounts for the muddled and insincere way that the GOP front-runner reacted to the Kosovo crisis—see "Team W.," by Jacob Heilbrunn, September 27). McCain likes America's sole-superpower status and seeks to exploit it; he doesn't fret unduly about "imperial overstretch" and other exaggerated menaces. He knows that, to some degree, being a superpower must be a use-it-or-lose-it proposition.

There is a connection between McCain's moral clarity about foreign policy and his moral clarity about the latest menace to the integrity of the Republican Party: Pat Buchanan and his grotesque view that World War II was the result of Anglo-American provocations against Nazi Germany. Once again, McCain didn't mince words about what Buchanan should do: Hit the road. This stand showed McCain was willing to take one of the great lessons of the century's struggle against totalitarianism—appeasement doesn't work—and apply it to an apologist for totalitarianism in his own party. "No political campaign is worth sacrificing our principles," he said.

George W., by contrast, played the role of Neville Chamberlain. As front-runner, he has greater responsibilities, which supposedly include the obligation not to build Buchanan up by paying attention to his outrageous views. Better to keep Buchanan inside the party, he said, so as not to drive off his purportedly numerous supporters. "It's politics," he told the Associated Press. "[S]hould I be the nominee ... I'm going to need every vote I can get among Republicans to win the election." Thus does the student of foreign policy realists practice campaign realism on the home front. Maybe it's not so crazy to join the pack swooning for McCain after all.

CHARLES LANE



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ON THE HILL

Whipped

ON A TUESDAY night in mid-September, in a small, private dining room of the Hunan Dynasty restaurant, Representative Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from San Francisco, was wooing the voters with steaming plates of sesame chicken and Peking duck. It might have been a typical—if slightly early—start to the campaign season, except for two things: the restaurant was not in California but in Washington, D.C. And the voters Pelosi was courting were not her California constituents, but other Democratic members of the House of Representatives, who had stopped by to hear why Pelosi is campaigning to be the House's majority whip when the 107th Congress convenes in January 2001.

Never mind that the House already has a majority whip, Texas Republican Tom DeLay, who is quite comfortable in the job. "We assume we're going to be back in the majority," Democratic Caucus Chairman Martin Frost explains, summing up the general mood among Democrats, who think they have the cash and the issues to take the chamber back next year. So, the question of who will lead them if they do has become more than a parlor game.

Minority Leader Richard Gephardt would, of course, be speaker, and his number two, Minority Whip David Bonior of Michigan, would become majority leader. But that leaves the number three slot open. The whip job has little glamour—it involves counting votes and marshaling support for the speaker's agenda. But it promises potentially immense power, as proven by DeLay. He has used the post, and the 60-some deputies he commands, to create a power base that has made him a prime mover of the House Republican agenda. It's not surprising, then, that Pelosi isn't the only one plotting to take DeLay's place. She already has two rivals—Steny Hoyer of Maryland and John Lewis of Georgia.

While this bespeaks Democratic confidence, it also poses problems for a party that is trying to shake its reputation for

being more a cobbled-together set of interest groups than a cohesive political force. Gephardt, who has struggled mightily this year to stifle old grievances, promises that voters in 2000 will see a party that has learned discipline in exile. But, as the leadership struggle threatens to divide the party along old battle lines, it raises the question of whether the Democrats' new-found unity can stand the test of power.

Already, some of Pelosi et al.'s colleagues are chagrined by their early squabbling. "I don't want to be presumptuous," says Representative Joe Crowley of New York, who, as president of the 23 Democrats in the House's freshman class, has been courted by both Hoyer and Pelosi. "It could backfire if we get to be too cocky and it seems like we think it's a fait accompli."

Pelosi, however, is unapologetic. "Those who snooze, lose," she counters. Thus far, her campaign has mostly been conducted over Chinese food. In early August, word leaked out about the meet-the-candidate dinners female colleagues were sponsoring for her at Hunan Dynasty. Hoyer and Lewis, after declaring that they were "shocked, shocked!" by Pelosi's early maneuvering, immediately began lining up their own supporters.

Each candidate lays claim to a Democratic constituency that feels it isn't currently represented in the party's elected leadership. Pelosi draws her most vocal support from women who see her candidacy as a long-delayed opportunity to have one of their own at the top. Lewis cites his heroism as a civil rights leader to press the case for an African American presence in the leadership. Hoyer, who expects to draw support from conservatives and New Democrats, is running as the candidate of experience, moderation, and, by default if not by declaration, white maleness.

In a world where politicians were rewarded for waiting their turn, Hoyer would be the natural choice. Sharp-featured and smooth before the cameras, his long-harbored desire to move up the ladder was stymied by the Democrats' loss in 1994. Still, Hoyer has continued to raise money for Democratic candidates, and, as Gephardt's principal recruiter of new talent, he has played a role in helping many members get to Congress in the first place. But Pelosi and Lewis have been doggedly trying to peel away crucial constituencies within the caucus.

"We feel confident that, when Democrats look for reasons to have the House back, one of the benefits will be having a progressive woman cut out of a different cloth than the current House leadership," says Pelosi backer Lynn Woolsey, the California Democrat who organized the most recent Chinese dinner. Pelosi anticipates running strong with members of

the California delegation and with liberals, who see a return to power as deliverance from years spent wandering in the desert while Republicans debated New Democrats about how far right to move the country. She's also working on making new friends: a prodigious fund-raiser, she donated \$96,000 to vulnerable Democrats—most of them moderates or conservatives—between the beginning of the year and the end of June, the most recent period for which figures are available.

Lewis, who headed the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee for a time and still bears a scar on his face from the beating Alabama state troopers gave him on the march from Selma to Montgomery, is relying on support from minorities, particularly the party's powerful Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). As one of Bonior's deputy whips, he knows what the job entails. But he says he fears that the party, more than happy to accept black votes, is less open to the idea of a black face in the leadership. "We're the most reliable and dependable segment of the Democratic Party," he says. "I don't want to see a caucus with only white Americans in the leadership."

Still, appealing to natural constituencies and winning them are two different things. Lewis's support within the CBC has been lukewarm—Albert Wynn and Elijah Cummings of Maryland are supporting Hoyer out of home-state loyalty, and Lewis' fellow Atlantan, Cynthia McKinney, supports Pelosi—and even his supporters acknowledge that he is lagging behind. Hoyer and Pelosi both claim to have received a large number of commitments (they won't say how many), but one aide to the Democratic leadership says any such assertions are suspect, especially in a secret-ballot election. "I've heard members say they're saying 'yes' to everybody," the aide explains.

Gephardt's attitude, essentially, is that politicians will be politicians and there is little he can do to discourage ambition. And if the race leads the three contenders to shower campaign contributions on their fellow Democrats, so much the better. But not all House Democrats are convinced that the race is such a good thing for a party with a history of fighting against itself as much as against the GOP. It's lost on no one that, since the revolution of 1994, House Republicans have been crippled by purges, intrigues, and coups in their upper ranks. And if that is what happens to the Democrats, their victory, if it happens, will also be bittersweet.

ANDREW RICE

The author is a staff writer at *The Hill*.



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Busted Budget

IF THE DETAILS of the proposed Republican federal budget were widely known and understood, it is hard to believe that even one American in ten would vote to keep the GOP in control of Congress. Thankfully, few or none of the abominations that Congress pro-

poses will actually survive a veto—the Republicans' political feebleness is their most endearing attribute. And yet the budgetary machinations in Congress offer a telling demonstration of the moral and intellectual decrepitude of the present Republican view of government.

Perhaps the most objectionable scheme currently under consideration is a cut in the Earned Income Tax Credit. The EITC is a subsidy for the working poor that is designed to offset regressive taxes. One might suppose that conservatives would approve of this program—freeing the poor from the burdens of taxation is a staple of Republican rhetoric. Yet, since taking control of Congress in 1995, the GOP majority has repeatedly sought to scale back the EITC.

This time, House Republicans have proposed to delay the payment of the credit. As it currently stands, EITC recipients get their credit, in the form of a check from the IRS, in one lump sum at the end of a year's work. The GOP leadership intends to stretch the EITC out over twelve monthly installments, which would make things easier for Congressional budgeteers by pushing some of the payments into the next fiscal year.

What makes this example particularly instructive is not the proposal itself, which is only mildly repellent by recent Congressional standards, but the phony arguments that have been put forth to justify it. As always, Republicans trotted out their familiar line that EITC recipients "pay no income taxes" and hence are not worthy of support. The EITC is designed mainly to offset not income taxes but Social Security payroll taxes, of which EITC beneficiaries pay a disproportionate share. House Speaker Dennis Hastert's spokesman asserted that the plan "doesn't hurt anybody. It's just spreading out the payments." This is ludicrous. Studies of the EITC show that its recipients use the checks for expenses such as repairing a car or paying off debt. Delaying the payments would force them to carry debt longer and, hence, pay more interest.

Majority Leader Dick Armey mushed together the "un-

deserving poor" and the "it's not a cut" arguments, commenting, "I would say it is denying them the lump-sum acceptance of my money." Since Armey has broached the topic of his money, we wonder whether he believes delaying his recently voted pay increase for a year would make him any worse off. The Republicans' best argument thus far is that spreading out the payments would actually aid the poor by helping them manage their money. What a touching display of concern for the providence of the impoverished! But whatever happened

to keeping the government out of people's personal financial affairs?

Congress has also singled out other programs that aid the poor, proposing to slash the Social Services Block Grant, which allows states to provide various kinds of assistance to the poor and disabled, as well as day care for children and similar programs. But the Republican majority's stinginess is not limited to an indifference to the poor; it is an all-encompassing obtuseness about the general interest and America's role in the world. Congress has zeroed out funding for peacekeeping in Kosovo and implementation of the Wye accord. It has cut federal support for basic science. Meanwhile, at the behest of the restaurant lobby, it has sought to expand the infamous tax deduction for business meals. What America needs, Congress seems to believe, is less scientific research and more three-martini lunches.

If the Republicans are going to wantonly hack away at the federal leviathan, you would think their cuts would at least have the benefit of reducing pork and waste. But, when it comes to these least justifiable of expenditures, Congress has been spending money like a dying tycoon. Members of both parties are engaged in a competition to prop up the most veterans hospitals, which are notorious for their inefficiency. Congress also threw billions of dollars at agricultural assistance—a boondoggle that primarily benefits agribusiness at the expense of consumers and goes against the sound free-market principle that government should not subsidize selected industries.

All this is happening at a time when leading figures in the Republican Party are trying to set out a new, more moderate policy vision. As GOP front-runner George W. Bush puts it, "Government must be carefully limited—but strong and active and respected within those bounds." The Republicans in Congress have made their philosophy in this regard abundantly clear. If Bush disagrees with that vision, he ought to say so. ■

N O T E B O O K

OVERFLOW: It's hard to imagine how life in eastern North Carolina could get any worse. Nearly two weeks after Hurricane Floyd dumped 20 inches of rain on the region, much of the area remains underwater; more than 3,000 homes have been destroyed or are heavily damaged, and at least 6,000 people are homeless. The floodwater is filled with hundreds of caskets uprooted from cemeteries and the carcasses of some of the 100,000 hogs and 2.5 million chickens and turkeys that drowned in the storm. Public health officials fear outbreaks of all sorts of waterborne diseases. All of this has prompted the federal government to inundate the region with disaster-relief funds: the Federal Emergency Management Agency has already pledged more than \$3.8 million in direct aid to hurricane victims in North Carolina, and President Clinton has authorized the Department of Labor to use \$12 million to hire temporary workers to help with the cleanup. This is as it should be. While critics of the government's disaster-relief policy are quick to note that 23,048 of the more than 39,265 people who have filed for state and federal assistance did not have flood insurance, it's important to remember that many of those who lost their homes in the floods didn't live along the Atlantic coast or in a floodplain. As one victim told *The New York Times*, "I thought I had been living on high ground. But there wasn't any high ground." The situation, however, is merely the exception that proves an important rule about the federal government's disaster-relief system. As Rutherford H. Platt, a geography professor at the University of Massachusetts and the author of *Disasters and Democracy*, has noted, "The broad thrust of federal policy is to provide disaster grants, loans, and tax deductions that encourage investment in hazardous areas." In the Carolinas, for instance, the coastal population continues to swell, and fewer than half of those living in these hurricane- and flood-prone areas have flood insurance. This sort of situation can get very expensive for the federal government: during the 1990s, Congress has approved an average of \$3.7 billion a year in supplemental disaster aid. One sensible reform currently wending its way through Congress is something called the Two Floods and You Are Out of the Taxpayer's Pocket Act, which would deny government-subsidized flood insurance to anyone whose home had been flooded twice during the past ten years. People who live in flood-prone areas would either have to buy flood insurance on their own or move out of harm's way. And, if more people move out of harm's way, there will be more aid resources for those people, such as the unfortunate inhabitants of eastern North Carolina, who are unexpectedly harmed by natural disasters.

TRUE COLORS: Maybe Jiang Zemin just can't help himself. On September 27, the Chinese president addressed the Fortune Forum in Shanghai, a fete thrown by *Fortune* magazine that drew hundreds of the world's chief executives, all eager to do business in China. But Jiang didn't use his speech to talk about China's efforts to join the World Trade Organization or to offer any new incentives to Western

businesses. Instead, Jiang treated his audience to a defiant lecture defending China's human rights record and reiterating his unyielding position on Taiwan. "We must first and foremost safeguard the people's rights to survival and development," Jiang said. "Otherwise we cannot even begin to talk about other rights." And, just in case anyone wanted to talk about those other rights, Jiang warned, "We oppose any efforts by any country to impose its own social system and ideology on another country." As for Taiwan, Jiang said, "[W]e will not undertake to renounce the use of force." Tellingly, though, Jiang's audience didn't seem to object to his bellicosity. Indeed, one attendee, Sumner Redstone of Viacom, told the *Financial Times*, "We do not view it as our role to tell the government of China how to run China. We want to do business. We cannot succeed in China without being a friend of the Chinese people and the Chinese government." Maybe Jiang knew what he was doing, after all.

NO JOKE: The United Nations Correspondents Association, an independent assemblage of journalists who cover the United Nations, recently unveiled the Ranan Lurie Political Cartoon Award, which will drop the hefty sum of \$10,000 into the lap of some lucky satirist. The prize will be awarded "in the presence" of Secretary General Kofi Annan, and, what's more, the cartoonists' work will be judged by an illustrious panel that includes noted funnyman Elie Wiesel, Nigeria's ambassador to the United Nations, Norman Mailer, and ... David Cone, the New York Yankees' Cy Young Award-winning pitcher. No doubt those dugout debates about the latest howler in *Die Zeit* will come in handy. And, for those who don't win one of the top three cash prizes, there's plenty of consolation in the form of no fewer than ten "honorable mention" plaques. Autographed by Cone?

GOING THE EXTRA MILE: The Lexis-Nexis search has become the harried journalist's favorite shortcut to reporting. Why interview people when you can simply hop on the computer, type in some search terms, and, voilà, reportage? To wit, a Nexis search of our own reveals a recent example, from a *Forbes* magazine article by Dan Seligman: "Whistle-blowers have been onstage a lot lately. A Nexis search yields 2,700 articles thus far in 1999 mentioning them." But Arnold Beichman, a fellow at the Hoover Institution, is apparently so time-pressed that he can't even conduct Nexis searches; rather, in one recent piece, he just *speculates* about what a search would turn up. In the fall 1999 issue of *The National Interest*, Beichman writes, "A Lexis-Nexis search, I'm sure, would find hundreds of couplings of 'Holocaust' and 'mystery.'" Putting our own reporting skills to the test, we confirmed Beichman's hypothesis, but only partially: a Nexis search found 122 instances of "Holocaust" within five words of "mystery."

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: A reference to Bill Bradley's "inured heart" in Martin Peretz's Washington Diarist column last week was rendered, via an editing error, as a reference to Bill Bradley's "injured heart." We apologize for the confusion. ■

New York Dispatch Shocked

By JED PERL

NEW YORKERS IMAGINE that they're prepared for any eventuality, but the city's huge arts community was certainly caught off guard on September 22. That was the day Mayor Rudolph Giuliani demanded that Arnold L. Lehman, the director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, either cancel "Sensation," an exhibition of young British artists' works that the mayor characterized as "sick stuff," or face losing some \$7 million that the city gives the museum each year.

By the end of Week One of the Brooklyn Museum vs. Giuliani, the city was canceling a check for nearly half a million dollars due to the museum on October 1, and the museum, represented by First Amendment expert Floyd Abrams, had filed a lawsuit in federal court accusing Giuliani of violating its constitutional rights. As is so often the case when art is overtaken by arts funding emergencies, the paintings and sculptures in question were beginning to seem completely beside the point. The critics from the city's papers who trooped out to Brooklyn to preview the show were just flotsam and jetsam swept up in a storm, and their opinions had about as much weight as a fashion editor's thoughts on Tommy Hilfiger's spring line.

"Sensation," with its truth-in-advertising title, has been a controversy-generating machine since it opened at the Royal Academy in London in 1997, and Lehman is determined that the show will go on, no matter what Giuliani does. The art world is in a bread-and-circuses mood; sad to say, the First Amendment fight, no matter how essential it is—and it is essential—becomes part of the sizzle. As the fast-track art world spins out what amounts to a dictionary definition of decadence, a loudmouth mayor is stomping on the Constitution.

The London protests against "Sensation" centered on Marcus Harvey's rendering, in paint splotches that look like children's handprints, of the face of Myra Hindley, a notorious murderer of children. Also among the more than three dozen artists in the exhibition, which is composed of works from the collection of advertising mogul Charles Saatchi, is Damien Hirst, who presents large glass boxes containing maggots and a rotting cow's head or a shark floating in formaldehyde. The work of Jake and Dinos Chapman is represented by child-size mannequins with penises and anuses where one would expect to find noses and mouths.

"Sensation" is designed to push whatever buttons can possibly be pushed on a museumgoer, and what especially pushed Giuliani's buttons when the catalogue was brought to his attention was a painting by

Chris Ofili titled "The Holy Virgin Mary." In announcing his determination to shut down either the show or the museum, the mayor made Ofili's painting sound as if it were a naturalistic Virgin Mary that had been splattered with excrement. But the work is, in fact, a stylized figure with strong Negroid features, swathed in petal-like robes and floating on a bright yellow psychedelic background. What probably got the mayor going was the list of materials used in the work, which includes elephant dung. He'd also no doubt heard that there were collaged elements from porn magazines. Although the show had not yet been installed, Giuliani knew exactly what he did not like. He came on strong with a combination of political opportunism, heartfelt personal belief, big-city demagoguery, and old-style philistinism.

As the arts funding controversies came home to New York to roost, there was outrage—justified, in my view—at Giuliani's assault on the Brooklyn Museum. But a lot of the artists I know were also depressed by the thought that a porn-glam contemporary show such as "Sensation" is exactly what an ambitious museum director such as Lehman (who came to the museum in 1997) believes he needs to polish his museum's image. When I compare Lehman's state-of-the-art marketing strategies and Warhol-style philistinism with Giuliani's threats to pull the plug, I can't find an innocent



"The Holy Virgin Mary" by Chris Ofili (1996). Paper collage, oil paint, glitter, polyester resin, map pins, and elephant dung on linen. 243.8 x 182.9 cm.

party. Among the private sources that the museum has tapped to fund the show is Christie's; the auction house is a world leader in the sale of contemporary art, and Saatchi is believed to sell as much as he buys. "Sensation" could be an auction preview. Apparently the only innocents left are the New Yorkers who never dreamed that their mayor would interfere in the programming of an art museum.

Giuliani's initial announcement that "you don't have a right to government subsidy for desecrating somebody else's religion" was almost immediately complicated by the news that Ofili is himself a Catholic. But Giuliani has not, at least so far, admitted that there are any ambiguities in the case. What nobody seems to doubt is that, whatever Giuliani's feelings may be as a Catholic confronting Ofili's "Virgin," the mayor is gaining points with his party's right wing as he prepares for the upcoming Senate race. The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights is behind the mayor—and some say it has pushed him to where he now stands, which is in the shoes of former New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato, who worked hand in hand with Senator Jesse Helms during the original 1989 attack on the National Endowment for the Arts. Would-be senator Hillary Clinton, after several days of silence, announced, "Our feelings of being offended should not lead to the penalizing and shutting down of an entire museum." Giuliani responded, "She agrees with using public funds to attack and bash the Catholic religion."

NO DOUBT WE'LL be hearing more about this as the campaign heats up. There is also no doubt that Lehman hoped to create a sensation with "Sensation." "I absolutely knew that there would be controversy," he told *The New York Times*, although, as the paper went on to observe, he got "more buzz than he had bargained for." In the next breath, Lehman explained that, once the controversy brought museumgoers to Brooklyn to view "Sensation," they would be "seeing really first-rate things." With that pronouncement, we pass from art-world realpolitik to art-world mental rot.

I saw "Sensation" in London, and, as far as I'm concerned, what Lehman and others experience as "first-rate" is the trashy media glitter that they can't distinguish from the glow of quality. An awful lot of the people who run our museums are almost laughably gullible. They've reeducated themselves in the name of pluralism and political correctness to the point where they can no longer respond directly to anything. External signs—big parties, big money, big scandals—are the only critical indicators that their atrophied sensibilities still recognize. Art has become an exciting bargaining chip rather than a thing unto itself. At one point during the museum's negotiations with the mayor's office, Robert S. Rubin, chairman of the museum's board, was discussing pulling Ofili's "Virgin" from the show. Lehman soon nixed that idea, but I cannot help thinking that the fact that Rubin even entertained the notion suggests how provisional and trite all questions of curatorial taste and judgment have become.

Of course, there's better and worse in "Sensation," but the stronger works, such as Rachel Whiteread's casts from everyday objects, are not all that terrific anyway and will not, in any event, be bringing in the crowds. Nothing that has happened

justifies Giuliani's revocation of the one-third of the museum's general operating expenses that comes from the city—and pays to keep such inarguable treasures as the museum's Egyptian collection before the public. The mayor should never have put us through the nightmare—seriously discussed during the week—of revoking the city's lease on its McKim, Mead & White building. But the fact that a Republican politician is going ballistic doesn't prove that the art is intrinsically powerful, either.

I agree with Lehman that this show must go on. In New York, where culture is in the very air we breathe, we deserve a mayor who understands what is at stake. A word of praise is in order for the strong, clear, early response of City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, a Catholic who, like Giuliani, finds the art "offensive" but, unlike the mayor, argues that "cultural institutions have to have freedom to exercise their judgment." Skeptics will point out that Vallone, a Democrat, would probably like to have support from Manhattan's arts community as he contemplates a mayoral race. But at least his political position jibes with the essential spirit of the city. And he spoke quickly. The city's major museums took six days to craft a strong statement against the mayor's action, which was signed by Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan Museum; Glenn Lowry, director of the Museum of Modern Art; and some 20 other figures.

If Giuliani wants to urge his fellow citizens to stay away from "Sensation," he can go right ahead and do so. But he doesn't seem to know where personal opinion ends and public life begins. In threatening to close down the Brooklyn Museum, one of the most beloved cultural institutions in this city and even in this country, he endangers a grand public trust and comes off as a schoolyard bully. The thing about bullies is that they wreak havoc even when they do not prevail. ■

Buchanan's Hitler problem, Part I.

Absolving Adolf

By JACOB HEILBRUNN

THERE'S SOMETHING MORE than a little disingenuous about the demands for Patrick Buchanan's political excommunication coming from several Republican presidential candidates, not to mention the former "Crossfire" host's media chums. Buchanan's sympathy for Nazi Germany's strategic predicament is hardly new and is certainly not a secret. For more than 20 years, he has been publicly ventilating his peculiar penchant for a revisionist assessment of both Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. And, during that time, he managed to secure high-paying work as the host of

a leading chat show and as an official in Ronald Reagan's White House.

Buchanan's fixation with the not-so-bad side of Hitler (and the not-so-good side of President Roosevelt's opposition to him) is not just long-standing—it's practically lifelong. From William Baldwin Buchanan, his iron-fisted father, Buchanan absorbed a powerful Anglophobic and anti-Communist *Weltanschauung*. As Pat Buchanan writes in his 1988 memoir, *Right From the Beginning*, "Before Pearl Harbor, my father's sympathies had been with the isolationists, with Charles Lindbergh and the America First Committee.... Sending millions of American boys to fight and die in Europe a second time, to pull Britain's chestnuts out of the fire, was something he could not accept. A popular sentiment, 'Let Hitler and Stalin fight it out,' would have summed up his attitude in the late 1930s." (Or Pat Buchanan's today.)

IN HIS NEW book, *A Republic, Not an Empire*, Buchanan goes to great lengths to exonerate Lindbergh of the charge of anti-Semitism that has haunted his legacy ever since his notorious 1941 Des Moines speech, in which he blamed Jews in Hollywood and in the press for stirring up pro-war sentiment in the United States. Buchanan does not provide his readers with the exact anti-Semitic words, noting only that Lindbergh had begun his odious remarks by saying, "It is not difficult to understand why Jewish people desire the overthrow of Nazi Germany. The persecution they suffered in Germany would be sufficient to make bitter enemies of any race. No person with a sense of dignity of mankind can condone the persecution of the Jewish race in Germany."

Buchanan seems to think this shows what a broad-minded fellow Lindbergh really was. But, of course, this view of the Jews as a separate "race" within America pursuing their own racial agenda—not as loyal American citizens who might have had their own country's interests at heart—is simply a more-benign-than-usual repackaging of the old "dual loyalty" smear. It is revealing that Buchanan implies that it negates Lindbergh's other animadversions—to say nothing of the Lone Eagle's acceptance of a medal with four swastikas on it from Herman Goering (which, indeed, is something else Buchanan neglects to mention to his readers).

In *Right from the Beginning*, Buchanan chronicles how his uncles who had served in World War II returned to tell him that the Germans "they had encountered had been excellent soldiers ... the German people would come back." There's an allusion to Germans picking through the rubble left by Allied bombs, but it's untempered by any frankness about the German people's role in the genocide. (In childhood war games, Buchanan recalls, "the Japanese were the preferred enemy. We hated 'the Japs.'") Now, Buchanan was all of seven years old when World War II ended. Thus, he would have only been old enough fully to comprehend—and, apparently, accept—such indulgent sentiments toward Germany, along with the rest of his father's America First ideology, *after* the Nazis had been defeated and the full extent of their barbarism became clear to all.

Buchanan's fascination with all things Nazi continued into his early adulthood. In his autobiography, Buchanan

recalls attending the 1963 March on Washington with his brother Buchs. The Buchanan boys' first move upon arriving on the Mall was to seek out George Lincoln Rockwell, whom Buchanan describes as "the ex-naval officer and articulate Nazi, who had set up headquarters in Arlington, and whom I had never met." Buchanan claims his purpose in paying this spontaneous visit to the "articulate" Führer of the American Nazi Party was to find out whether there was going to be any violence between the Nazis and the demonstrators. There wasn't. The reader is left wondering why Buchanan thought it so necessary to stipulate that "I had never met" Rockwell. Who said he had?

AFTER LEAVING THE Nixon White House, where he worked as a speechwriter, Buchanan presented his first, and still most extraordinary, piece of writing about the man who permanently defiled the German nation. In a 1977 syndicated newspaper column, Buchanan wrote: "Though Hitler was indeed racist and anti-Semitic to the core, a man who without compunction could commit murder and genocide, he was also an individual of great courage, a soldier's soldier in the Great War, a political organizer of the first rank, a leader steeped in the history of Europe, who possessed oratorical powers that could awe even those who despised him."

As communications director in the Reagan White House, Buchanan lobbied in favor of Reagan's plan to accept a 1985 invitation by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to visit the military cemetery at Bitburg—despite what Buchanan's notes from one White House meeting on the subject referred to as the "pressure of the Jews." The visit had become a public relations nightmare for Reagan when it was revealed that the cemetery contained the remains of both Wehrmacht soldiers and Waffen SS troops, yet Buchanan wanted Reagan to speak of these dead soldiers as "victims" of the Nazi regime.

It was also during the Reagan years that Buchanan sought to exercise his influence on behalf of accused Nazi war criminals living in the United States. He supported efforts to shut down the Office of Special Investigations, a Justice Department agency that attempts to track down Nazis. He met, in the White House, with supporters of Arthur Rudolph, a former Nazi rocket scientist who was campaigning to regain American citizenship. He tried to get Attorney General Ed Meese to halt the deportation to the Soviet Union of Karl Linnaas, an Estonian who was accused of being a guard in a Tartu concentration camp.

Buchanan justified these efforts as resistance to turning people over to Soviet justice, and, in one case, he had a point, of sorts. After his White House stint, Buchanan's pet cause was John Demjanjuk, the Ukrainian-born Cleveland autoworker who was accused by the Justice Department and Israel of being "Ivan the Terrible," the notorious sadist of the Treblinka death camp. An Israeli court ultimately exonerated Demjanjuk on appeal. But, as usual, Buchanan pursued a valid point in the most inflammatory way possible. He referred to Demjanjuk's plight as "an American Dreyfus" affair, as though there were some parallel between the overzealous prosecution of a former Nazi camp guard and the European anti-Semitism of which Dreyfus was only a single,

symbolic victim. And Demjanjuk was, indeed, a camp guard. Though the documents purportedly proving him to be Ivan the Terrible turned out to be KGB forgeries, the investigation did reveal that he had been a guard at the Sobibor death camp and had lied about it on his American immigration papers.

The effort to bring Nazis, any Nazis, to book has always rankled Buchanan. Nuremberg, the trial that most people today regard as a flawed but important precedent in establishing individual accountability for war crimes, was attacked after the war by the remnants of America First as Soviet-influenced "victor's justice." Buchanan has kept this flame burning brightly not only in his Demjanjuk crusade but in other cases as well. In a 1990 column, he described the decision of the court not to indict Hermann Goering for the terror bombing of Rotterdam, London, and Warsaw as a product of British hypocrisy. How could the authors of Dresden indict the air marshal when they had done the same thing first? "When Goering turned his bombers loose on London in September 1940, the British had been terror bombing since May 11," Buchanan wrote. (In fact, the British had unsuccessfully bombed a few industrial targets; Dresden lay five years in the future.) Buchanan added that "Admiral Erich Raeder went to Spandau for life as a war criminal for plotting an invasion of Norway designed to block a British attack. Before the German troops landed, Norway's neutrality had already been violated by British mines; and British marines were 24 hours away." Again, Hitler was only acting in self-defense.

Buchanan has not only sought to establish a moral equivalence between Britain's purported war crimes and Hitler's; he has even flirted with outright denial of Hitler's crimes. In a 1990 column defending Demjanjuk, he claimed that diesel fumes couldn't have been toxic enough to kill 850,000 Jews at the Treblinka death camp—as, in fact, they did. His proof? "In 1988, ninety-seven youths, trapped 400 feet underground in a D.C. tunnel, while two locomotives spewed diesel exhaust into the car, emerged unharmed after forty-five minutes," Buchanan wrote. The source for Buchanan's column is still unknown (he never revealed it). But similar canards have appeared in the literature of the Institute for Historical Review, an organization that openly advocates Holocaust denial.

Buchanan also has not hesitated to claim that the United States ran concentration camps that were practically as bad as Hitler's. In yet another 1990 column, Buchanan praised Canadian revisionist James Bacques's book *Other Losses*, which claims that one million German POWs had perished after the war at the hands of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was supposedly running POW camps in which Hitler's captured troops were systematically starved to death.

Buchanan also turned his Lindberghian rhetoric against the Bush administration's Gulf war plans and the support they enjoyed from the Israeli Defense Ministry's "American amen corner." Once again, his views seemed to be related to a sympathetic reading of Hitler's career. To insist that Saddam Hussein depart from Kuwait, Buchanan wrote in 1990, "is to demand that the Iraqi dictator commit suicide, that he resign himself to living in Arab history as a coward who caved in to the United States. Even Adolf Hitler preferred to die, a suicide in his bunker, than agree to such a disgrace." One might have thought that by April 1945 Hitler had already managed to dis-

grace himself and his nation. The real reason Hitler committed suicide, of course, was that he feared being put on trial by the Soviets.

This column was perhaps the ultimate homage to Buchanan's "individual of great courage." Having invented a palatable, if not exactly honorable, life for Hitler, Buchanan had invented a noble death for him, too. ■

Buchanan's Hitler problem, Part II.

Fact-free

By JEFFREY HERF

ACCORDING TO PAT BUCHANAN, World War II was all a bloody, avoidable mistake. In his new book, *A Republic, Not an Empire*, he writes that, according to *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's territorial ambitions lay only in the East, and therefore Britain, France, and the United States should have left him to take on Stalin alone. Indeed, the West's strategic failure was not appeasement but provocation, in the form of Britain's security guarantee to Poland in the summer of 1939 and the Roosevelt administration's support for it. Based on this, Buchanan surmises that the West deserves about half the blame for the Holocaust. Without the guarantee to Poland, he asserts, "there might have been no Dunkirk, no blitz, no Vichy, no destruction of the Jewish populations of Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, or even Italy." There would have been only a defeated Soviet Union (and maybe millions more Jews murdered on the Eastern front, but Buchanan is silent on that particular issue).

Whatever their morality, do these claims stand up historically? Actually, Hitler despised the Western liberal democracies as much as he despised the Soviet Union. He railed against the United States, in particular, not just for its Jews but also for its Negroes and Slavs. According to Gerhard Weinberg, the great historian of Hitler's foreign policy, Hitler believed that American power posed a direct threat to his goal of German global hegemony. In his important essay "Hitler's Image of the United States," Weinberg shows how, after overrunning France in 1940, Hitler's inner circle began planning a third war—against the United States. In 1943, Hitler launched a huge battleship-construction program, the "Z Plan," to confront the American Navy. At the same time, he set up naval bases on the coasts of France and Africa. In *Tomorrow the World: Hitler, Northwest Africa and the Path Toward America*, Norman Goda further documents Germany's plans to build a massive surface fleet, develop a transatlantic bomber, and procure naval bases in French Africa, the Canary Islands, the Azores, and the Cape Verde Islands.

JEFFREY HERF is professor of history at Ohio University. His most recent book is *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past and the Two Germanys* (Harvard University Press).

At the heart of Buchanan's ignorance is his lack of understanding of Hitler's strategy to win a second world war. Hitler always knew that his greatest advantage lay in Germany's early rearmament program, and thus his strategy called for a rapid sequence of short blitzkriegs that would have eventually consumed all of Europe—not just Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. Though Winston Churchill's rise to power and the Battle of Britain in the summer of 1940 postponed plans for a German invasion of England, this hardly meant that Germany would never again have had the intention or capability to threaten Britain or the United States, as Buchanan emphatically claims.

ON THE CONTRARY, a Nazi victory over the Soviet Union, as Churchill understood very well, would have given Germany control of the Soviets' vast mineral and food resources, effectively sparing Germany the threat of a British and American naval blockade of a Nazi-occupied Europe. Moreover, if Britain capitulated, Hitler would have been able to concentrate all of his resources on the Eastern front, accelerating his hopscotch across the Continent. Having established a "fortress Europa" by 1941, or by 1942 at the latest, he would have been able to turn his attention back to his most formidable enemies in the West—Britain and, especially, the United States—with no fear of a two-front war.

Buchanan displays no grasp of the strategic significance of America's early role in the war. Had President Roosevelt not decided to defend ships in convoys sailing through the U-boat-infested Atlantic and to quietly support London between 1939 and 1941, the pressure within Britain—as Churchill confided to FDR—to accept a negotiated peace with Hitler could have become overwhelming. Rather than a potent ally and a weakened enemy, the United States would have faced an even more powerful—and, *pace* Buchanan, intrinsically hostile—Germany all by itself. Buchanan's policies would have led to precisely this outcome.

Following the Royal Air Force's victory in the Battle of Britain in 1940, it was not the case, as Buchanan asserts, that the United States was "more secure." Though Hitler's timetable had been shaken, he still had a plausible strategy for victory in a world war based on the not invalid assumption that his invasion of the Soviet Union would be a rapid success (given the weakened state of the Red Army after Stalin's purges and the fact that Stalin had been lulled to sleep by the Nazi-Soviet pact). By the summer of 1940, Churchill and FDR understood that England, on its own, was no longer able to preserve a balance of power in Europe; only the United States had both the means and the shared values to do that. Germany had simply become too powerful. FDR and his military strategists, especially those in the Navy, had concluded that the vital interests of the United States required that England not be defeated. Were that to happen, the German submarine and surface navy, soon to include aircraft carriers, would have had an open season on American shipping in the Atlantic and even on the harbors and cities of the East Coast. (Indeed, on December 11, 1941, four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hitler declared war on the United States, and German submarines sank dozens of ships in coastal waters.)

Hence, the United States took up the task that Britain had performed for four centuries but was no longer powerful enough to carry out on its own: preventing a hostile hegemonic power from dominating all of Europe. Had the United States not intervened when it did, the chances that Nazi Germany would have been defeated by 1945, or even at all, would have been slim. As the British historian Richard Overy has recently and powerfully demonstrated, the victory of the Soviet Union and the Western democracies was anything but an inevitability. Had Britain and then the United States abstained from World War II, all indications are that Germany would have won the war in Europe and then prepared to take on the United States in tandem with Japan. We, not Nazi Germany, would have faced a two-front war.

To prevent this outcome, Roosevelt forged the Atlantic Alliance. It was not Western resistance to Nazi Germany that "saved the Soviet Union for Communism," as Buchanan claims. Rather, just as Japan's invasions provided a nationalist rallying cry for otherwise unpopular Communist forces in China, nothing contributed more to the internal consolidation of Stalin's rule and to the survival and expansion of Soviet power than Hitler's attack on the Eastern front in June 1941.

The American and British decisions to continue the resistance to Germany were based not only on conventional balance-of-power concerns. The political leadership of both societies eventually understood that a victory for Hitler's Germany would mean the destruction of Western civilization in the place where it had originated. When Churchill said that he would make a speech in the House of Commons in favor of the devil if that were necessary to forge an alliance against Hitler, he expressed what millions of decent people on both sides of the Atlantic reluctantly concluded: namely, that to defeat the evil of Hitler's Germany it was necessary to ally with the (then) lesser evil of Stalin's Russia. From the perspective of post-1989 Europe, the decision looks even wiser. ■

Campaign Journal Story Time

By DANA MILBANK

THERE ARE TWO ways for Al Gore to win the presidency. The first is for him to present a clear and compelling vision of why he should be president. The second is for him to put a majority of American voters on the campaign payroll.

The first method has obvious benefits, but the Gore campaign has, until now, shown more inclination to follow the second. When I asked one Gore man about why the candidate needed a sixth pollster and a similar number of message mavens, he explained wryly that the campaign was adopting the "full employment strategy"—under the assumption that Americans will vote for a man who pays their salaries.

Similar thinking seems to be at work in the recent endorsement sweepstakes, the very essence of the Gore campaign's tactical thinking. A few weeks back, campaign chairman Tony Coelho set the tone. "I believe in endorsements," he said. "I don't believe in anything else." I had no idea how serious he was until the Gore campaign began circulating names of every Tom, Dick, and Harry for Gore. On September 21, the campaign, after announcing some endorsements from congressmen, sent out a press release declaring that "more than 100 Long Island leaders" endorsed Gore. Who are these leaders? Well, there's Steve Goldberg, Long Beach deputy zone leader, and Lynne Bizzarro, senior assistant attorney for some unspecified town. Bizzarro indeed. Does it really make a difference whether Irvin Toliver, director of human services for the town of Huntington, is a Gore man? Or how about Dolores Otter, listed on Gore's press release without a title? You can practically hear the buzz sweeping the nation: "Well, if Dolores Otter is on board, count me in."

NEXT CAME WORD that "Gore scores again in New York as more top leaders join his team." This time it was a batch of endorsements that included Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silvers (never mind that he'd been a Gore man for a decade or so), and it was clearly an effort to show momentum. The announcement "comes only one day after the vice president picked up the support of ten members of Congress and more than 100 Long Island Democrats," the press release said.

Bill Bradley, for his part, had snagged the more important endorsement of Senator Pat Moynihan, but the challenger wasn't above the silliness. Bradley sent out a press release announcing endorsements from 24 officials from Strafford County, New Hampshire, including the all-important Bob Watson (Rochester school board member) and Gerald McCarthy (Farmington selectman). The next day, Gore fired back with word that "hundreds of women from across America today endorsed Al Gore"—and then proceeded to list them, including various and sundry school board members throughout this great land. The mayors of Burnsville and Fitchburg got a mention, as did Rhonda Walters, former first lady of Oklahoma. The mayors of Madison and Greenwich were so important they were listed twice. Bradley capped the volley the next day with a press release declaring that four private citizens in Iowa had switched from Gore to Bradley; the release even quoted one Paul Slappey of Cedar Rapids as saying, "I mean, wow, this guy was a Rhodes Scholar." The upshot: Gore may have sewed up Dolores Otter, but, with Bradley, Slappey is happy.

The strangest part of the endorsement ritual is the fact that the commitments aren't worth a thing. Gore, as expected, will get the lion's share of supporters, and Bradley, if he scores early upsets, will cause them to change sides. Either way, they're useless. And that's why Gore needs to do less of this tactical positioning and more of the vision thing. Gore aides promise they're shifting away from the endorsement bazaar—though, as I write, a fresh batch of endorsements from Hawaii is crossing my screen.

NO DOUBT, THE above portrait of the Gore campaign will bring an angry rebuke from one Bob Somerby of Baltimore. Somerby, Gore's roommate when they were students at Harvard University, runs a website that lashes out at the media miscreants who dare to criticize the vice president's flawless campaign. In a recent dispatch, Somerby, employing a naughty word for equine feces, describes your correspondent's campaign coverage as "stomach-turning" and accuses me of making light of child molestation, having an obsession with naked presidential candidates, and, worst of all, being too hard on Gore.

Now, the first two charges are fair enough, but Somerby's point about Gore demands rebuttal. True, the coverage of Gore's campaign has been excessively negative. But the Gore campaign has brought much of this on itself by being tactical and reactive rather than articulating a vision.

In fact, the problem hasn't been the messenger but the message—or lack thereof. The sources of the negative coverage are often Gore's allies—President Clinton's aides, Clinton himself, moderate New Democrats, and rank-and-file Gore supporters. Their beefs vary, but the common element is frustration with Gore's inability to rise above the maneuverings of Washington to answer for Americans the fundamental question: What's the Gore candidacy about? For a year now, Gore loyalists have been waiting and wondering when the vice president will tell his story.

Fortunately for Gore, his new message gurus, Carter Eskew and Bob Shrum, have finally begun to paint the big picture. Over the past three weeks, Gore has begun to speak in broad themes, and he rolled out his overarching message at the Democrats' meeting on September 25. "Let us make change work for working families," he said at the beginning of his speech. Aides say this theme, unlike the short-lived "practical idealism," is here to stay. It gives Gore what he desperately needs: a message that allows him to connect the dots among the dozens of policy proposals he has rolled out.

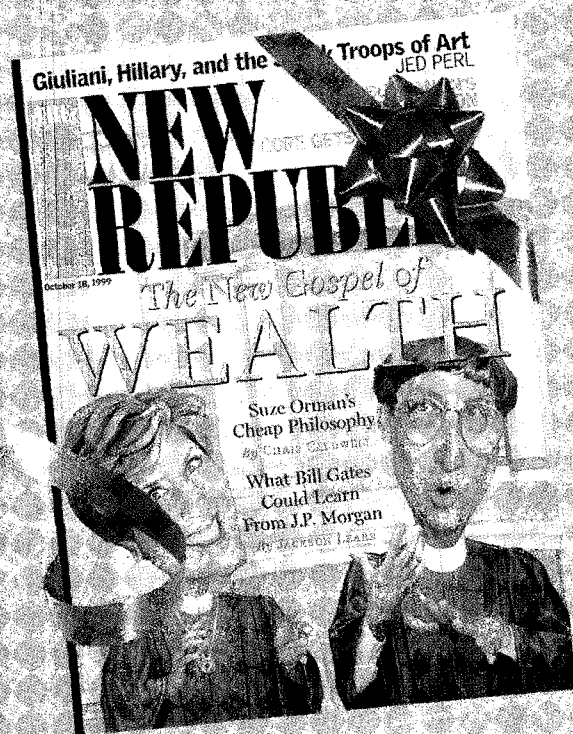
It will allow him to say, in a sentence, why he's running for president and what his campaign is all about. Gore's various policies—early-childhood education, high-tech growth, the environment, livability, faith-based programs, and, coming soon, a fatherhood initiative—need an overarching theme that unites them, and this is it. The change-that-works idea allows Gore to talk about shifts occurring, changes in the economy and the American way of life, and it poses a question: Do we go back to George W. and the old Republican policies (the elder Bush's recession), or back to Bradley and the old liberal favorites (President Dukakis), or do we try something new?

If the Gore campaign can shift from its daily-story-driven mentality to the big picture, it may find that Gore's predicament is not as bad as the coverage would suggest. There's been much made of the fact that Bradley is likely to pull even with his rival in terms of campaign cash on hand. But one reason for that is Gore's emphasis on direct mail, which is expensive and garners smaller contributions. These smaller contributions receive higher levels of matching funds, however, and Gore aides expect the \$15 million they will receive in matching funds to be twice Bradley's amount. And Gore is

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still on track to raise the maximum possible for the primary, about \$40 million. "We'll have everything we need," says Peter Knight, Gore's money man.

Gore remains in a strong strategic position. Even if Bradley can win New Hampshire and then New York on March 7, as current polls indicate, Gore can strike back by winning California and clobbering Bradley in the South. There's also evidence that independents and moderate Democrats, the strength of the Bradley campaign, will lose interest when they see Bradley running to the left of Gore. "Bradley's made the choice a lot easier," says Simon Rosenberg, head of the New Democrat Network.

At the same time, Gore has moved to calm Coelho's fractious organization. He has wisely decided to move the campaign headquarters to Tennessee, out of the Washington echo chamber. Also, the well-liked Michael Whouley has taken charge of the Gore forces in New Hampshire and Iowa. Whouley, arguably the party's top operative, will run the campaign's field work, while Craig Smith, Gore's campaign manager and a former Clinton hand, is assigned to solidify labor and party support, and Donna Brazile, Smith's deputy, handles constituency groups. For the first time, Gore can stop worrying about who's running what and start talking about why he wants to run the country.

Gore's advisers complain that they're damned no matter what they do. They avoided flooding the market with endorsements so that they wouldn't look like Walter Mondale, and they were criticized because Bush had more endorsements and Bradley was winning a fair number. Now Gore is pouring out endorsements, and, sure enough, he looks like Mondale. If Gore speaks earnestly from the podium, he is stiff. If he acts loose and casual, he's faking it. "We can't catch a break," says one top Gore adviser.

It's true. On September 25 at the Democratic gathering, Gore gave the best performance I've ever seen him give. He did everything he was supposed to do: he was conversational, not condescending; he had few notes; he even threw in a Dole stroll. He told a cohesive story about his mom's rise from poverty (hence his concern for women and the poor), his dad, Tennessee's first labor commissioner and the man who showed young Al the slave rings in his hometown (concern for labor and race), and his turn from Vietnam to journalism to politics. And yet the College Democrat seated next to me wasn't impressed. "He sounded so fake," she said.

After his speech, Gore worked the crowd as his campaign played the Gore theme song, which segued into an unusual choice, the British artist Fatboy Slim's hit "Praise You." The lyrics seemed to express the Gore campaign's old belief that Democrats must inevitably flock to their standard bearer:

*We've come a long, long way together
Through the hard times and the good.
I have to celebrate you baby.
I have to praise you like I should.*

Now disabused of that notion, Gore has begun to lay out a stronger rationale for why he should be president. If he keeps it up, the praise should come. And not just from Dolores Otter. ■

A good old idea for education.

Gore Corps

By JONATHAN FOX

VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE has been promising that, were he elected president, he would bring "revolutionary change" to education. In calling for an overhaul of the teaching profession, Gore has proposed a number of reforms, including rigorous subject-matter tests, a five-year license-renewal requirement, and swift but fair measures to remove ineffective teachers. But perhaps the most intriguing part of Gore's teacher-quality prospectus is his call for a "Twenty-first Century Teacher Corps" that would recruit thousands of smart, idealistic college students to teach in the nation's most troubled schools. "We need to attract a new generation of teachers to the profession," Gore declared in May. "Let's put America's brightest and most dedicated young people to work changing the lives of the children who need it most." The idea is intuitively appealing. So intuitively appealing, in fact, that one automatically wonders: Why hasn't this been tried before?

Actually, it has—in a big way. Unbeknownst to Gore domestic policy adviser William Galston when he drafted the plan (and perhaps unbeknownst to Gore himself, although he's not saying), the federal government ran such a program—simply dubbed Teacher Corps—from 1966 to 1981. The first incarnation of Teacher Corps had the same goal as Gore's proposal: improving education at ailing urban and rural schools, as well as on Native American reservations and at juvenile justice facilities. And the old Teacher Corps was, by all accounts, a success, which must be very heartening for Gore and Galston.

The brainchild of Wisconsin Democratic Senator Gaylord Nelson, who sponsored the program's original legislation along with Senator Ted Kennedy in 1965, Teacher Corps was designed, in Nelson's words, to "offer young men and women an opportunity to begin to teach in difficult and challenging situations at home as the Peace Corps [had] done abroad." Launched during a national shortage of teachers, Teacher Corps originally recruited young people lacking traditional education-school experience for two-year internships at high-poverty schools. Under the watch of veteran mentors, the interns taught part-time while finishing coursework for their master's degrees and teaching licenses, becoming eligible to work full-time when their internships ended. Later, as teacher shortages eased during the 1970s, the focus of Teacher Corps shifted to retraining veteran instructors to teach in low-income schools. During its 17-year life span, the program trained 25,000 teachers to work in nearly 170 school districts. Says William Smith, an education commis-

JONATHAN FOX is a Washington-based education reporter.

sioner under Jimmy Carter who directed Teacher Corps in 1971 and from 1973 to 1979, "It was the best thing that ever came out of the pipeline."

In 1984, the Congressional Research Service judged the program's intensive field-training approach a success in preparing teachers to work in high-poverty areas and improving teacher-training institutions contracted to help instruct Teacher Corps interns. Two years earlier, a study by SRI International, an independent research firm, found that Teacher Corps often trained teachers better than education schools did, increased community involvement in schools, and made a difference in schools even after project funding had lapsed. "The overall positive nature of our findings is contrary to the predominant voice that continues to be heard about the ineffectiveness of federal program interventions," SRI said.

The secret of Teacher Corps's success, Smith says, was that the program didn't merely throw money at schools; rather, by giving schools teachers, it provided them with human capital that each school was able to put to different uses. "Within a system of poor schools," Smith says, "you must deal with each school as a unique entity." Indeed, Teacher Corps, which never received more than \$37.5 million annually in federal funds, arguably did more to improve the education of low-income children than its Great Society cousin, Title I, which has provided billions of dollars in general aid to low-income schools. Still, the favorable evaluations of the program came too late: the Reagan administration had killed Teacher Corps in 1981.

BUT NOW GORE, wittingly or not, is seeking to correct Reagan's mistake. How would the Gore program stack up against the old Teacher Corps? It's too early to say, since Gore's plan is still short on details; key questions about the plan include its cost, the number of teachers it intends to recruit, and the type of training those teachers will receive. But the few specifics Gore has offered are encouraging. Most importantly, Gore would try to lure recent high school graduates to the program by offering them up to \$10,000 toward college tuition in exchange for a commitment to teach for four years after college; the program would also entice those wishing to make a mid-career switch to teaching by giving them \$10,000 bonuses and free retraining.

But the money, obviously, won't be the most powerful lure of Gore's Teacher Corps. Rather, it's the program's call to idealism, which it shares with its predecessor. "There's a lot of pent-up idealism among young people not expressing itself as it did twenty, thirty years ago," Galston says. "Young people today are very skeptical of national politics but very eager to serve in their local communities."

And their service is desperately needed, as one of the biggest problems facing underperforming schools is the dearth of good teachers. "The vice president," says Galston, "is well-acquainted with the most up-to-date research in education that indicates teacher quality is the single most important variant in student achievement." Indeed, perhaps the "revolutionary change" Gore seeks in education will be accomplished, in part, by bringing education reform full circle. ■

Chocolate City's vanilla candidate.

White Man Talking

By JASON ZENGERLE

IN MID-SEPTEMBER, Bill Bradley starred in a "Spike Lee Joint." Only Bradley's cameo wasn't in a movie; rather, it was at a Washington reception thrown in the presidential candidate's honor by Lee, Samuel L. Jackson, Cornel West, and a host of other African American glitterati. As the seminal D.C. go-go band E.U.—whose most famous song, "Da Butt," was featured in Lee's 1988 film *School Daze*—tried out a new number, seemingly titled "Bill Bradley's On the Move," and the former Washington mayors Marion Barry and Sharon Pratt Kelly danced the electric slide, members of the black establishment lined up to pay tribute to Bradley. The most effusive homage, not surprisingly, came from West, whom the Bradley campaign identifies as the candidate's primary adviser on race. "I don't just endorse Bill Bradley," the Harvard professor proclaimed in introducing the former senator. "Endorse is too weak and impoverished a term. I'm in solidarity with him because he's my brother." As the crowd cheered his remarks, West shouted, "We in a chocolate city, y'all." Shortly thereafter, the vanilla candidate took the stage.

It's doubtful that Bradley felt out of place. Only weeks earlier, he had paid a visit to Al Sharpton and his supporters in Harlem. During his political career, and even prior to it, during his basketball-playing days, Bradley has spent considerable time in black environs—a fact he duly noted in his speech at the Washington reception. "Whether I'm in Harlem or whether I'm in Watts, whether I'm in South Central or whether I'm in South Side Chicago," Bradley said, "it's all the same for me. We're all in this together and we're gonna move forward if it's the last thing that I do as president."

A major reason Bradley visits all these places, of course, is to convey the message that he cares deeply about race. As he told Sharpton and his supporters in August, "Racial unity is not a political position. It is who I am. It's what I believe." Coming from another politician, these words might sound sanctimonious, but Bradley's interest in race relations is long-standing and sincere, beginning with the civil rights movement in the 1960s and continuing through his career in the Senate. It's telling, however, that in his presidential campaign Bradley's targeting the likes of Sharpton and Barry, divisive politicians who exploit black resentment of whites, widen the divide Bradley talks about closing, and generally act as if race relations in America have progressed not a whit since the 1950s.

For all of Bradley's talk of making racial unity a "defining issue" in his campaign, then, it's not clear he has any idea how to achieve it. With his focus on old-fashioned white

racial prejudice (rather than on structural inequality or self-destructive behavior) as the fundamental impediment to improving race relations and the condition of black America and his fixation on the black-white divide (rather than on the new demographic reality of a growing Latino and Asian population), Bradley's approach to improving race relations seems as if it would better address the racial problems of the 1960s than it would today's. Yes, Bradley has demonstrated time and again that he clearly cares about race. But is that enough?

Bradley has long been a big believer in talking about race. In October 1996, during one of his last speeches in the Senate, he practically made it a requirement for anyone seeking to occupy the White House. "[L]et us ask people who run for president to give us their pedigrees on race," Bradley said, apparently unaware of the infelicity of that particular wording, "including the real-life experiences that led them to their present understanding."

So what are Bradley's experiences? Growing up in Crystal City, Missouri, Bradley made friends with blacks on his Little League baseball team and went to an integrated high school, where race relations were good enough that a black student was elected to serve as vice president of his high school class. But, while Crystal City may not have been plagued by outright racial turmoil—in his memoir, *Time Present, Time Past*, Bradley writes of watching the scenes on television of the forced integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and thinking, "It all seemed so foreign from Crystal City"—Bradley did have some early brushes with white racism. When his Little League team played in other parts of Missouri, such as the southeastern bootheel that juts into Arkansas, some restaurants and hotels wouldn't serve his black teammates. Even closer to home, Bradley's Aunt Bub, whom Bradley considered a "second mother," was a font of racist sentiments. "[W]hen my beloved Aunt Bub spoke, she didn't talk about African Americans with respect," Bradley has recalled. "She didn't hate, but her language was racially abusive."

It wasn't until Bradley got to Princeton University, though, that, in his words, "racial discrimination became the ultimate evil for me." He took a course on the Civil War, which broadened his understanding of the history of race in America. In 1964, as a college intern in the Senate, Bradley watched from the gallery as the Civil Rights Bill was passed; it was that vote that persuaded Bradley, until then a Republican like his banker father, to become a Democrat.

But more formative than any college course or Senate vote was Bradley's basketball experience. Although all of his Princeton teammates were white, Bradley played in all-star competitions at which his roommates were often black.

Then, a few years later, when Bradley joined the New York Knicks of the National Basketball Association—65 percent of whose players at the time were black—he entered into, as he puts it, a "black world" and, in his mind, at least, acquired a special understanding about race. "Nothing then, not even a careful reading of American history," Bradley wrote in his 1976 book about basketball, *Life on the Run*, "had prepared me for the impact my teammates have made on me."

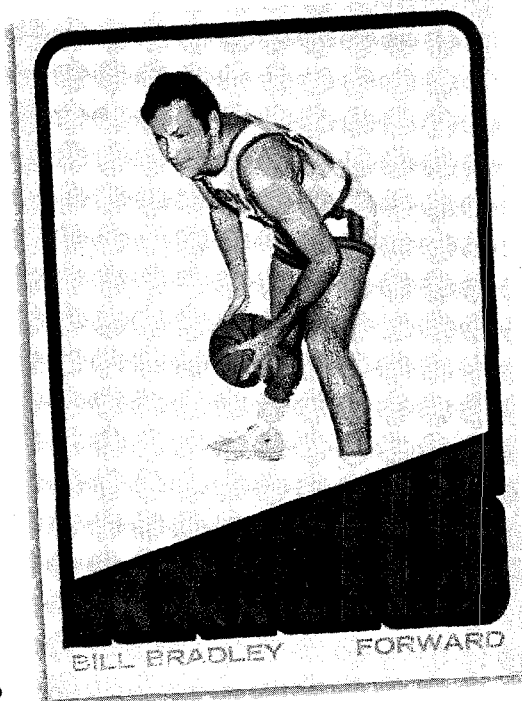
In fact, much of *Life on the Run* is a chronicle of that impact. When the Knicks visited Atlanta, Bradley overheard his black teammates making nervous allusions to "bossman," "boy," and "sit in the back of the bus"; he faced the icy glares of some black players when the all-white band in the Atlanta arena played "Dixie." When his team walked into a hotel in Phoenix, he observed how "the size and blackness of our group creates a minor sensation"; later, at the Phoenix arena, he heard the fans' racist remarks targeted at his teammates.

Finally, when one of Bradley's black teammates, only two hours after thrilling a Madison Square Garden crowd, was the subject of racial taunts that led to a fistfight outside the arena, Bradley thought, "How many times ... will racial hatred erupt unexpectedly before I learn that it is a part of the American experience." In *Time Present, Time Past*, Bradley writes of his basketball experience, "I saw that if you're black in America, you never know when the next moment might bring a slight, a slur, or a slug."

That, more or less, remains Bradley's view of race relations in America today. Although he pays occasional lip service to the fact that race relations have improved since the '60s and '70s, in his heart he seems to believe otherwise. In 1996, Bradley confessed, during a panel discussion on race, "When

the [1964] Civil Rights Bill passed ... I thought it would make America a better place. But, as we have seen in the intervening years, things have not evolved as we would have liked." Similarly, in *Time Present, Time Past*, he writes, "Now, thirty years after [the] optimism and the moral uplift of the civil-rights movement, we find ourselves facing each other across the great divide—a chasm of racial thinking.... Things have gotten too bad. Now it's a matter of survival."

And, when Bradley says "survival," he isn't just engaging in hyperbole. Indeed, to hear his view of contemporary race relations, minorities live in a state of constant danger. As he declared at New York's Cooper Union in an April speech on race, "Violence is often just below the surface of race relations in America." Just as racial hatred led to the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, Bradley said in the Cooper Union speech, in recent years—with church burnings in the South and racially motivated killings such as the heinous dragging murder of James Byrd in Jasper,



Texas—"the flames and hatreds of racism burned again."

The only way to extinguish these flames, in Bradley's view, is "to vanquish racial discord from our hearts." But how would Bradley help us do that? As he acknowledged in his Cooper Union speech, the racial divisions he discerns are "divisions of the heart more than of the law." Therefore, Bradley doesn't propose many governmental remedies. Yes, he supports affirmative action. (Although his definition of the type he supports is rather pie-in-the-sky: "Whites need to be assured that blacks with lesser skills don't get preferences. Blacks need to be assured that if they have shown their ability, they won't be shut out because of subjective racial judgments.") He's also promised that, as president, he would end racial profiling, and, in an apparent change of heart from his Senate days, he recently told Sharpton that he opposes mandatory minimum-sentencing requirements.

But most of the work Bradley proposes to do on improving race relations deals with talk and tone-setting. He's been a big supporter of "racial unity forums" and seems to favor holding a "national conversation on race"—which doesn't sound much different from the national chat President Clinton has already staged, to no lasting visible effect. Beyond that, Bradley has promised to make racial unity the defining ethos of his presidency. "When Ronald Reagan was president, everyone knew that if you wanted to please the boss, you cut taxes, increased military spending, and fought communism," Bradley said at Cooper Union. "If I'm president, I want one thing to be known: If you want to please the boss, one of the things you'd better show is how in your department or agency you've furthered tolerance and racial understanding." Of course, it's easy to imagine how Bradley's benign preference for tolerance and racial understanding may lead to some not-so-benign results. Consider a mid-level staffer in the Department of Transportation of a Bradley administration who had to decide whether to fund a highway project in Baltimore. The proposal for the project is shoddy, but Baltimore is a majority-black city. Would the boss be mad if the bureaucrat rejected the proposal?

As for how nonwhites outside of government might work to further tolerance and understanding, Bradley doesn't have much to say on the topic these days. But that wasn't always the case. In 1991, Bradley took to the Senate floor to make a plea for candid discussion about race. "We will never understand the problems of our cities," Bradley said, "the factories closed, the housing filled with rats, the hospitals losing doctors, the schools pockmarked with bullet holes, the middle class moved away, until a white person can point out the epidemic of minority illegitimacy, drug addiction, and homicides without being charged a racist." For whatever reason, though, Bradley himself has recently become reluctant to

point these things out. Similarly, in a 1992 speech he gave in the Senate, he noted some ways not to achieve racial unity. Two phenomena he cited in particular: "replacing a corrupt white mayor with a corrupt black mayor" and "well-known black spokespersons [who] fill the evening news with threats and bombast." So what's Bradley doing rubbing elbows with Sharpton and Barry?

In his fixation on white racism as the greatest problem plaguing race relations today, Bradley betrays an outdated mindset. The man whose racial awakening occurred during the '60s and whose racial pedigree, as he would call it, was further developed during the '70s has yet to enter the '90s. In fact, he has yet to enter the '90s in more ways than one. It's striking that while Al Gore and George W. Bush campaign around the country speaking Spanish—in an acknowledgment of the demographic trend lines showing that the Hispanic population will nearly double over the next 30

years—Bradley continues to primarily conceive of race relations in the framework of black and white. This has not always served him well. In 1996, for instance, when Bradley gave a speech in Los Angeles on race relations, his focus on the black-white divide didn't sit very well with some Latinos in the audience. "You talked about problems between blacks and whites, but do you think the situation is just as bad between blacks and Latinos?" one audience member asked.

And Latinos aren't the only ones who haven't kindled to Bradley's approach to racial issues. Oddly enough, Bradley isn't doing particularly well among rank-and-file black voters, either. While he may enjoy the support of black celebrities such as Lee and West and Michael Jordan—who made a \$1,000 contribution to Bradley's campaign—an August survey

conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that 42 percent of black respondents didn't even know who Bradley was. Gore and Bush, by contrast, had recognition rates of 92 percent and 86 percent, respectively.

But Bradley's outdatedness when it comes to race does serve him well in one respect: it imbues him with a moral authority that comes in handy when you're running a campaign based on the notion that you're morally superior to your opponents. Indeed, Bradley's frequent invocations of the cant, "Slavery was our original sin, just as race remains our unresolved dilemma," appear to have made the biggest impression on liberal whites, who undoubtedly pine for a white man, such as Bradley, who claims to have a special understanding of racial issues. As Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a black congresswoman from Cleveland, recently remarked to *The Hill* newspaper, "In Cleveland, the guys who are supporting Bradley are the ones who went to Princeton with him." Evidently, for one group at least, caring *is* enough. ■

122 BILL BRADLEY • Forward

HT: 6'5" WT: 205 School: Princeton
BORN: 7-23-49 Home: New York, New York

Bill provides Knicks with a fluid offense and plays a key role in team's defensive setup. He was a big scorer on intercollegiate circuit, scoring 2,503 points in an 83-game Princeton varsity career.

BILL HAS A FINE SPEAKING VOICE.

CAREER PRO STATISTICS

			G	FG	FT	REB	PTS	AVG
67-68	New York	NBA	45	142	76	113	360	8.0
68-69	New York	NBA	82	407	206	350	1021	12.4
69-70	New York	NBA	87	413	145	239	971	14.5
70-71	New York	NBA	76	413	144	260	970	12.4
71-72	New York	NBA	78	504	169	250	1177	15.1
Career Totals			350	1879	740	1212	4498	12.9

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Suze Orman, a financial guru for our time.

Cheap Emotion

By CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

SUZE ORMAN, AMERICA'S best-selling financial guru, has owned an apartment on 57th Street in Manhattan for about a year now. But when journalists come to New York to see her, she welcomes them instead in a rented room at the Stanhope Hotel, across Fifth Avenue from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It seems Orman still hasn't gotten around to making her place on 57th livable or visitable, because she's in such anguish over buying the furnishings. "I'm not a spontaneous person," she says. "I'm really, really ... it drives my friends crazy. ... Everything I do is so calculated when it comes to money. If I go into a store and I see something I want to buy, even with more money than I'll ever know what to do with at this point, I don't. I'm so non-spontaneous when it comes to money." And non-spontaneous when it comes to things in general: When Orman comes to the door, she has on gold earrings, a gold medallion, and a gold Cartier watch, which, she notes proudly, are the only jewelry she ever wears.

That Orman would behave this way is hardly surprising. Her financial philosophy boils down to a kind of hyperconscious fiscal anality: resist consumer urges, avoid debt, save your pennies (literally), and some day you'll be rich, as she is. What is remarkable, though, is that this "penny saved is a penny earned" philosophy has won Orman an enormous following. Her two big trade books, *The 9 Steps to Financial Freedom* (1997) and *The Courage to Be Rich* (which was released last March), both hit number one on *The New York Times'* self-help bestseller list. Indeed, for much of the spring, Orman held the two top spots. *Publishers Weekly* recently calculated that, at close to two million copies sold, *9 Steps* was the best-selling nonfiction book of 1998. Orman's "Financial Freedom Hour," broadcast on QVC, is entering its fifth year as a mainstay of the cable shopping channel—even if counseling financial prudence on a televised junk emporium is as incongruous a project as William Gladstone's missionary work among streetwalkers. Even more improbably, she has taken her act over to the ostensibly highbrow airwaves of PBS, where she has also been a hit.

Orman packages her advice not as merely another get-rich scheme, but rather as a means to psychological, even spiritual, transformation. She says she wants to change people's *relationship* to money. "Money is a living entity," she writes, "and it responds to energy exactly the same way you do. It is drawn to those who welcome it, those who respect it. Wouldn't you rather be with people who respect you and who

don't want you to be something you're not? Your money feels the same way." She makes frequent references to Eastern religion and dabbles in psychobabble, calling on her audience to recover "early money memories." (Did your friends take better vacations than you? What did your first wallet look like? Did Dad berate Mom about her purchases?) Then she presents all of this in a singsong, regular-girl style. Orman says "I'm like" when she means "I said," trips constantly into malapropisms, and peppers her conversation with "Omigod." She uses words such as "fancy-schmantzy" and drives home her points with a wide repertoire of winks, clucks, nods, and smiles. You might not think this approach to money management would sell. How come it so clearly does?

ORMAN HAS HER OWN narrative of "early money memories." Conveniently enough, they suit her point while simultaneously giving her audience a sympathetic, and familiar, figure with whom to identify. The tale begins with her upbringing in a blue-collar Jewish family in South Chicago. Her father, to whom *9 Steps* is dedicated, was a failed restaurateur who once lost all the skin on his arms and chest carrying a red-hot cash register out of a burning building. (Suze: "That was when I learned that money is obviously more important than life itself.") Orman was an undergraduate at the University of Illinois, where she majored in social work. A big lesson: The old people in the Drexel Home for the Aged, where she worked summers, were treated differently depending on how much money they had made.

In college, Orman roomed with Judy Jacklin, girlfriend and future wife of actor John Belushi. Belushi moved into their off-campus apartment, where he would practice physical-comedy routines (one depicted a fetus enduring an onslaught of nutrients from a Thanksgiving dinner). Orman worked her way through school: days at a local deli, nights at a club called the Red Lion, where the band REO Speedwagon got its start and Dan Fogelberg was an occasional performer. ("I'll never forget Dan saying he was going out West to make it big, and we were going, 'Okay,'"—Suze displays a dimple-inducing smile—"you go, Dan.")

Soon Orman went West, as well. She worked as a waitress at the Buttercup Bakery in Berkeley, California, where she first confronted financial catastrophe. As a child who always felt "less than"—a phrase to which Orman never feels the need to append an object—she had made a habit of stealing her dad's change to buy things for her friends and, later, of taking her mom's credit cards. Now, she borrowed \$50,000 from friends and customers at the Buttercup. Her broker lost

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it speculating on oil futures.

Orman decided she could manage money better than that. She applied for a job at Merrill Lynch, took a training course, and started at the company's bottom rung. That's when she stopped going by Susan and started calling herself Suze. ("I didn't want to change my *name*, like everybody back then was changing their name to Moonchild and Hulk and all these, you know, fancy-schmantzy, *crazy* names.") In 1987, she left Prudential Securities, where she'd moved after leaving Merrill Lynch, and started her own financial-planning firm, which was devoted largely to retirement advice.



But, at just the moment when she was "dating someone who was *extremely* wealthy and I was wanting to keep up," an assistant removed all her files in the middle of the night, and Orman's business was ruined. Although a *Forbes* magazine article expressed skepticism about why Orman recovered only \$8,000 in court against this employee, there's a plausible explanation: according to Orman, her license was retained by Prudential for the first weeks after she left. This may be a routine practice, but it cost Orman dearly. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company, with which she had a long-standing relationship dating from her Prudential days, suddenly announced a wave of early retire-

ments, spectacularly lucrative for the broker who could corral the commissions from the 401(k) plans. But, without a license, Orman was limited to a rainmaking role. Only her assistant was actually licensed to take commissions. And, when the assistant grew impatient with the way the income was divvied up, Orman had no legal recourse. At any rate, even after the debacle, Orman kept spending \$25,000 a month "in order to keep up the *pretense* that I was this fancy-schmantzy successful financial adviser." She soon found herself with all her credit cards maxed out and hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. She even cashed in her own retirement fund.

The late '80s were bleak years for Orman. But then, in the early '90s, another slew of PG&E early retirements provided her a foothold to pull herself out of debt. She started giving two- to three-hour pep talks to retirees, mostly about the virtues of annuities, and, in 1994, PG&E asked her to broadcast her retirement-advice pitch to 7,000 employees via satellite. According to Orman's publicist, Sandi Mendelson, the real break came in January 1995, when the small Newmarket Press printed the gist of her pep talk as a book: *You've Earned It, Don't Lose It*. Orman appeared on the network Q2—a now-defunct branch of QVC, and normally a sleepy market for books—and sold out her whole stock in a matter of minutes. (*You've Earned It* has now sold 400,000 copies.) After that, her career moved in giant steps: the QVC appearances begat the books, and the books begat more QVC appearances, which in turn begat the PBS specials (about which more anon) and the eight-figure fortune.

Orman looks at her trail of calamity and deprivation as her books' biggest asset. ("Like, some of the stories in there, even though it's not my name, are me.") What's more, she has an unquenchable fascination—whether out of empathy or *Schadenfreude*—with those who have found themselves in similar circumstances. Sitting in the Stanhope, Orman lowers her voice and describes a recent visit to a Midwestern town. "A woman came up to me and said her husband—now *ex*-husband; it just happened—is the top stockbroker in town."

Orman nods. "And he's bankrupt. She couldn't live anymore with the concept that *thousands* of people were coming to this man under the pretense that he was an astute financial adviser—and he may be for *their* money—but that his *own* money and *own life* were in total disarray, and in credit card debt"—she spreads a hand open and nods—"beyond the beyond." Orman has many such stories, all equally impossible to confirm in detail. "One of the heads of Pacific Gas and Electric," she continues, "when [he] retired, had a \$13,000-a-month pension, a million dollars in his 401(k)—because it was a forced thing. And he wasn't gonna be able to stay retired! Because his credit card debt and his monthly

expenses were *so beyond* the money that his 401(k) could generate." She raises her eyebrows and tilts her head as if to say, "Can you imagine?"

But what about the actual content of her advice? As William Barrett acidly noted in *Forbes*, *9 Steps* includes little advice on such standard financial instruments as stocks, say, or bonds. Instead, Orman's recipe consists largely of commonsense thrift: if you have a 30-year mortgage, one extra mortgage payment a year will allow you to pay off your house eight years early; using coins instead of a calling card at pay phones can save you 75 cents a day, which, over 40 years, comes to \$74,746; invest in no-load mutual funds and long-term-care insurance, but stay away from credit card companies and gourmet coffee shops ("When did it become natural that we spend \$2.75 a day on a cup of coffee?"); and so on.

This isn't the stuff of Peter Lynch. It's the stuff of your grandparents who survived the Great Depression—which is a rather odd note to strike in 1999, a year with seemingly endless opportunity to make money and even more opportunity to spend it. But that's precisely the point. The statistic one must assimilate to understand the Orman phenomenon is that America's personal-savings rate, for all the country's economic prowess, is negative one percent—the lowest in the industrialized West. This stunning profligacy, in good part, reflects credit card debt; credit card companies extended \$2.5 trillion worth of it in 1998, nearly quadruple the amount of just six years earlier. It is a time of nearly unprecedented prosperity, but that prosperity just barely masks an entire class of Americans living right on the brink of ruin—a situation that would indeed seem familiar to anybody acquainted with the Depression era.

ORMAN'S CLAIM TO have "been there" clearly resonates. The millions of adherents she's drawn in do not merely buy her books. They also buy into the philosophy she preaches, to the point where her following has come to resemble a movement. Every day, her Internet message board gets dozens of queries—virtually all of them from women—and Orman only recently stopped answering them personally. Plenty of these women write to compare the yields, mixes, and tax liabilities of their various investment portfolios. But for every person like these, there are several like "Pat" from suburban Washington, D.C., who writes to share a shaggy-dog story about how an old photo of herself as a small child desperately clutching all the possessions she could lug triggered an "early money memory" of intense insecurity. Pat concludes:

I still have a long way to go in working through my memories and the pain that is still attached to those memories. At the same time, I am making progress! It may be slow progress, but it is still progress!

I thought I would share this in the hopes that it will help someone else who is still struggling with the First Three Steps to Financial Freedom!

Orman insists she knows "absolutely nothing" about twelve-step programs and has never attended one. But the

structural resemblance between Alcoholics Anonymous's twelve steps and her nine is uncanny, and, outside of the recovery movement, Orman may be America's most forthright champion of slogans—and of their thought-eradicating potential. "We're a culture of slogans," she says. Discussing prenuptial agreements with Ann Curry of NBC News two years ago, Orman chided, "You know, 'm' doesn't just stand for marriage; it stands for money as well, Ann." Orman sums up her attitude toward credit as "Face it so you can erase it." Recapitulating the old publishing joke that anyone could write a best-selling book if he called it *Lincoln's Doctor's Dog*, Orman has taken two of the hot genres of the past decade—financial advice and addiction/recovery—and melded them into one.

EVERY SIX TO eight weeks, Orman travels to the studios of the QVC shopping network in West Chester, Pennsylvania. There she does a handful of live shows she calls the "Financial Freedom Hour." Orman is a legend at QVC. Last February, she sold 35,000 copies of *The Courage to Be Rich* in one hour, and today she accounts for 80 percent of the network's sales of books (other than cookbooks). According to QVC Director of Merchandising Karen Fonner, Orman appeals to the high end of QVC's market: professionals with at least four years of college, an average age of 38, and an average income of \$65,000.

It may have been this upscale viewership that gave Orman the wild idea that what worked on the crassly commercial QVC could also work on the haughtily anti-materialist PBS. A few years ago, Orman decided she wanted to do a public broadcasting special. Through a friend of a friend at KTCA in St. Paul, Minnesota, she tapped into PBS's general fund for national fund-raising programs. T. Rowe Price, which sells the same no-load mutual funds Orman so strongly recommends in her books and videos, came on board as a sponsor. Q-Direct, a subsidiary of QVC, became an unpublicized partner, pitching in \$125,000. The result was the hour-long PBS special "9 Steps," which debuted during the March 1998 pledge season. "The Courage to Be Rich" followed a year later.

Fonner is mightily satisfied with her company's investment in the special, even if most of the benefits are indirect. "From QVC's perspective, we wanted Suze to appeal to the PBS viewer," Fonner says, "so the PBS viewer might want to shop on QVC." QVC takes a basic retailer's cut from all the Orman products it sells, but Fonner chose not to market the PBS video lest it compete with the videos QVC sells under an exclusive retail arrangement with Orman. Nonetheless, Fonner noticed a glut of first-time Orman buyers during the months after the PBS special aired. And the great boon for the shopping network was getting hooked up to PBS's kudos and high-end viewership in the first place. "We've kind of formed a relationship with PBS now. At least I have," she says. "I'll call and say, 'You guys might want to look at this, it might help you pledge.' I don't know if *they'd* tell you that."

Orman is pushing it, though, when she brags about having the "number one and number two shows in the history of

PBS." In fact, says Alan Foster, vice president for fund-raising at PBS, the all-time giants are performance shows: the early Three Tenors in concert and *Les Misérables*. That's not to say that public broadcasting has any reason to regret its financial association with Orman. Over the past two decades, PBS has turned its pledge seasons into nonstop open-mike nights for self-help moguls: proto-men's-movement enthusiast John Bradshaw, "Love Doctor" Leo Buscaglia, New Age clinician Andrew Weil, and Deepak Chopra. But Orman leaves them all in the dust. She is, according to Foster, "the largest money raiser" among the self-help gurus.

Despite the socioeconomic discontinuity between her QVC and PBS audiences, Orman sees them as having a stark financial kinship: "At three o'clock in the morning, when no one can look into your bedroom, those PBSers are thinking about money," she says. "How do they pay their bills? How do they retire? How do they send their children to school? Their thoughts, which are dominated mostly probably by money, will be no different from the QVCers or the Oprah audience." She could be a Freudian talking about sex.

That the arrangement essentially turns public broadcasting into an advertising vehicle for a home shopping channel says something about the political and cultural climate in which we live. So does the way her show's success lumps public television viewers together with the de facto membership of Debtors Anonymous. This is a paradox of the 1990s economy. It has turned the median suburbanite into a world-traveling collector of Luciano Pavarotti records. But it has also turned the opera-watching classes into irresponsible populist rabble themselves, many of them secretly trembling at the form letter from the credit agency.

SITTING IN HER New York hotel room, Orman looks me straight in the eye and says, "You're sitting here—all right?—after hundreds of interviews that I've given. Doesn't it seem that this is the first time that I've ever talked about this? When you look at my eyes, when you look at my gestures, when you hear the tones in my voice, when you hear the emotion coming on in me? I can say this over and over again and it is—it's so alive, and it's so real for me, that it doesn't matter how many times I give this interview, 'cause this just isn't an interview of words to tell you the facts. This is my life; this really is my life. So all these other people now that can write these books that are trying to copy—I hope it's their life, because it's my life that is selling; it is the belief in these words and the passion that I have for your money, as well as my money, that's selling."

It's hard to know just how many of Orman's stories are genuine. Still, by the standards of the entertainment age, there is an eerie sort of honesty about her. Asked why she and Oprah have such an affinity, she throws up her hands. "It's not as if I know Oprah that way," she says. "When you go on the Oprah show, you go and you leave and that's it. It's a very professional relationship." And she's rare among celebrities in seeming not to care a whit whether others believe that she writes her own stuff: when asked if she likes writing, Orman winces. The ghostwriter Cheryl Merseer collaborates with Orman on all her books. While Orman insists that she

does all the initial drafts herself, she concedes that Merseer takes out "what she thinks isn't necessary."

Indeed, there is something about Orman that makes an awful lot of sense. When she preaches the need for "courage," she means the courage to open your bills and face squarely what you owe, to feel more secure. If Orman wants Americans to cut down on senseless purchases and keep a hawk-like eye on interest rates, it's not so that they can enjoy simple pleasures such as art, conversation, or sunsets. It's so that they can enjoy simple pleasures such as not waking up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat—which, the environment of prosperity notwithstanding, is no small thing.

FOR ALL AMERICANS' self-congratulation about erasing the budget deficit, it's probably more accurate to say that the deficit has merely been, like everything else in the 1990s, privatized—in this case through consumer spending. To Orman's credit, she's not one to say that everything will work out all right if we just continue to pursue our project of a sub-rosa Keynesianism in which we use credit card debt, rather than government spending, to keep demand cranked up. Orman is implicitly questioning the viability of a debt-based, luxury-item-driven, millennial economy in which higher living standards have more to do with higher material expectations than greater means to afford them. We've seen this before. This is populism—in the original sense the word had before it got co-opted simply to describe the kind of politics poor people practice when they're mad. This is populism as the historian Richard Hofstadter charted it: a critique of a credit-based economy made by hardworking but generally overindebted people who've discovered too late that compound interest is a more benevolent friend and a more spiteful adversary than it at first appears.

"A lot of times," Orman says, "people go, 'Yeah, her advice is, yeah, use charge instead of a calling card, don't buy gourmet coffee.' It's far more complicated than that. The people know that, and that's what they're responding to." Orman is right, in a sense. She may not be the next Peter Lynch. But, whether she knows it or not, she is restoring a sort of family-dinner-table ethnic wisdom. That's what the strange-sounding, anthropomorphizing parables and the taboo-busting delight in the physicality of money are meant to accomplish. Orman doesn't really mean what she says about the sentience of your assets. ("I have to learn to be more careful," she admits, when I bring up a quote from *Newsweek* about how her house's feelings would be hurt if she sold it.)

"My message," Orman says, "is that you can have anything you want in life as long as you can afford it." Hers is merely a hot-off-the-presses means to a fresh-off-the-boat end. Orman is making a postmodern fortune by restoring to money some of the visceral quality it had when a mill worker or cane-cutter would look at a dollar bill and see dinner for his family. Her philosophy could be summed like this: "You're gonna send us all to the poorhouse with that credit card! You think money grows on trees? You think your father's made of money?" It's pathetic that adults need to be talked to this way. But a lot of them do. ■

Stanley Kauffmann on Films Playing Games

TRY TO NAME a sport that has not been the subject of a film. Polo and lacrosse, perhaps. But almost all the rest, from the most active (boxing, football) to the most sedentary (poker, chess) have been the centers of films—some of them very often. Film feeds on sports for obvious reasons: sports are perennially popular, they usually take place before crowds (some drama critics have held that sports are the best modern American theater), and they all involve struggle, even if it's only against the clock.

But there is a snare that very few such films avoid. In order to make a picture about a sport, a story has to be contrived. That story, though it often includes great chunks of the game in question, cannot concentrate wholly on the sport: it has to include the non-playing life of a player, and in most cases a woman must be involved. Sometimes other elements of players' lives can be important (male friendship in *Bang the Drum Slowly*, for instance), but as far back as I can remember sports films, beginning with *The Babe Comes Home* (1927), in which Babe Ruth (played by himself) fell in love with the laundress who cleaned his uniforms, non-sports elements obtrude. The purity of sport, its absoluteness in a world of alloys—which is a chief reason why millions respond to it—is impugned. It isn't that athletes don't have sex lives, don't fight disease, or don't claw their social way upward: the point is that, by and large, no matter how the press may exploit players' privacy, when the game or fight or match is on, we are rid of their privacies, of their very mortality, in the pure athletic moment. That is what films compromise.

For Love of the Game (Universal) plunges right into the middle of the snare. The game is baseball. An aging star of the Detroit Tigers is pitching his last game, a crucial one, at the same time that his most intense love affair is breaking up. These two strands are interwoven in the screenplay by Dana Stevens, from a

novel by Michael Shaara. We can make a pretty good guess about the outcome of the game (though we may not guess the extra fillip). Any viewer over the age of five—no, four—will guess the outcome with the woman.

This is Kevin Costner's third baseball picture, after *Bull Durham* and *Field of Dreams*, and it's more taking than the seaminess of the first and the fantasy of the second. Besides, no film star has ever looked better in a baseball uniform than Costner does. (Anyone who thinks there's something indigenously apt about the baseball uniform and American bodies doesn't remember Gary Cooper's ungainliness as Lou Gehrig in *Pride of the Yankees*.) Costner is so credible that, even more than usual, the story is an irritating interruption of the game that he is pitching. The woman is Kelly Preston, who tries bravely, along with Costner and the director, Sam Raimi, to brighten up the basically stale romantic scenes. But the real contest in this picture is between the intrusive story and baseball itself.

Breakfast of Champions (Buena Vista) is not about sports. The phrase was once an advertising slogan for a cereal and has since been used as a running gag—now a limping one—delivered by waiters when they serve martinis. The film itself is an instance of a rare phenomenon: it is dreadful but interesting.

Alan Rudolph, who directed, adapted the screenplay from a 1973 novel by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and here sustains his record for bungling possibly good ideas. (His most recent bungle was *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*.) Still, whatever his shortcomings as a filmmaker, Rudolph has one superb gift: salesmanship. Despite his artistic record, he was able, first, to sell himself yet again. Second, he sold the idea of this film. Third, he convinced two major stars, Bruce Willis and Nick Nolte, to appear in highly eccentric roles; and Rudolph also convinced a major actor, Albert Finney, to

accompany them.

Imagine *American Beauty* re-conceived as an expressionist satire—with the same constrictions of personality by business life, the same hidden frenzies in happy-seeming characters, and with comparable sexual shenanigans, but with all these elements now spun into externalized, exaggerated form. Imagine that all these matters are intended as comedy, and the result is *Breakfast of Champions*.

Bruce Willis runs a prospering auto sales firm in Midland City and is omnipresent on TV and billboards as Mr. Smiles. Of course he is on his way to non-smiling troubles. His wife, Barbara Hershey, is both pampered and, in any significant sense, neglected. His deputy is Nick Nolte, trying manfully to hide his womanly quirks. (Nolte cross-dresses at home with his wife and is terrified that his hobby will be discovered.) Albert Finney is a lonely, nutty old writer, little of whose work has been published, and then only in porno mags, who is quite unexpectedly named guest of honor at a Midland City arts festival. These people and others are set against a wild cartoon of a production designed wickedly by Nina Ruscio, and they are all hustled along by Rudolph as the plot—almost literally—thickens.

If the above suggests that the picture is engrossing, apologies. It is too conscious of its eccentricities: it doesn't live easily in its texture, it keeps bragging tacitly about it. Willis and Nolte are more skilled actors than they are accounted by many—Willis's versatility is especially scanted—but farcical grace is not at their beck, and their director obviously doesn't know when they are flubbing. Finney's character is plopped into the picture abruptly—a different town, a different tone—and it takes too long before we learn his connection with what we had been seeing up to that time. Besides, he is never permitted to make sufficient connection with the others to substantiate what might have been a good performance.

Still, though it's wearisome to watch a long series of misfires in writing and acting, it's undeniably agreeable to know that this film exists. In a time when film genres are reduced in number—thrillers, sci-fi, adolescent gropings are among the few still in use—it's momentarily heartening to see an American film that tries to fly above the nervously sweating majority. And with two genre stars. Congratulations to Rudolph on his salesmanship at least. ■

How Bill Gates makes J.P. Morgan look good.

Unsweet Smell of Success

By JACKSON LEARS

I.

THE RICH MAY BE "different from you and me," as F. Scott Fitzgerald remarked, but in a country that claims to be democratic few Americans want to discuss the public consequences of those differences, least of all the rich themselves. The current bull market has intensified the reluctance: as economic inequalities widen, a chorus of feel-good commentary congratulates fearless investors for "the courage to be rich," for creating "universal" prosperity. In the dream-world of endless abundance sponsored by the corporate media, it is as if the playing field, having been leveled by the long boom, is now being smoothed out by a herd of sport utility vehicles. Wealth earns its legitimacy by denying its exclusivity.

As plain talk about money and power retreats to the margins, the language of economic life becomes a bland pudding of upbeat banality and clinical neutrality. Suddenly it seems as if all of America is getting connected, trading Internet startups, building McMansions. Never mind that two-thirds of the household incomes in America are stagnant or declining, and fully 50 percent of Americans have no assets at all. "We" are rich. Or so we learn, every day, from National Public Radio and *The New York Times* and CNN and *USA Today*.

Contemporary celebrants of prosperity have fostered the faith that American economic life is a roistering egalitarian m  le where there are no embittered outsiders, only entrepreneurs waiting to make their move. Since the 1980s, American business literature has acquired a swaggering new tone: entrepreneurial, technocratic, faux-democratic. Management seminars everywhere are full of chatter about "empowerment." In the iconography of success, the dyspeptic organization man and the bloated plutocrat have been replaced by the trim, shirt-sleeved venture capitalist—a guy like you or me, only willing to work a little harder, a little faster, a little smarter.

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The reigning mythology assumes that we can choose to be rich, but the assumption of choice is framed by determinism. Those great enduring abstractions—"the market," "the economy," "technology"—are all reified into neutral, omnipotent entities that command common homage and serve common aims. In this desiccated idiom, political and economic conflicts evaporate: decisions that serve the needs of some groups more than the needs of other groups (such as interest rate hikes) are presented as neutral responses to impersonal forces. For all the celebration of choice in private life, genuine choices

MORGAN:
AMERICAN FINANCIER
by Jean Strouse
(Random House, 796 pp., \$34.95)

BUSINESS @ THE SPEED
OF THOUGHT
by Bill Gates
(Warner Books, 470 pp., \$30)

FASTER:
THE ACCELERATION OF
JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING
by James Gleick
(Pantheon, 304 pp., \$24)

seem virtually absent from public life. Politicians do little more than supervise the fine-tuning of "the economy." As free-market fundamentalism seeps into the mainstream, the interests of Wall Street become conflated and confused with the interests of the entire nation.

The resurgent hegemony of spectacular wealth has led some commentators to suppose that we have entered a new gilded age, an era of unapologetic greed comparable to the epoch of the robber barons. The analogy is intriguing, but problematic: there are superficial similarities and fundamental differences between then and now. One way to flesh them out, and to reflect on how much—and on how little—the rich have changed since the *fin* of the last *siecle*, is to examine a business icon from each historical moment—J.P. Morgan from the first gilded age, Bill Gates from this one.

Like Morgan, the old rich tended to be portly and sedentary: they were remote

from popular sentiment and concerned about its potential for disrupting the social order. Like Gates, the new rich are fit and energetic, filled with an allegedly democratic enthusiasm for a cyberfuture that will allegedly empower us all. But despite their rhetoric of inclusiveness, the rich still inhabit a private world of power and privilege. The rich still are different.

II.

JOHN PIERPONT MORGAN was the quintessential bloated plutocrat, but as Jean Strouse demonstrates, he was also a sharp-eyed meritocrat and a gifted financier. Morgan managed much of the money supply in America from the 1880s until his death in 1913—the year the Federal Reserve System was created, in effect, to fill his shoes. For decades he served as the unofficial central banker of the United States. He bailed out the U.S. Treasury, the New York Stock Exchange, and dozens of mismanaged railroads; he disciplined unruly investors and entrepreneurs; he mingled with presidents and prime ministers; and he saved collapsing financial markets on at least a half-dozen occasions. He stood for sound money and tight credit, and for the maintenance of the United States as a magnet for foreign investment. Above all, he stood for stability, or keeping the economy "on track." Morgan was adept at accomplishing all these goals, a task that he equated with promoting the public good. Whether there was a larger public good in his religion of wealth and stability is a question that never occurred to him.

Bill Gates's character and career reveal continuities with Morgan's. Both men were animated from childhood by a relentless drive for mastery of their economic surroundings. Both had a head for figures, a flair for rapid calculation and bold decision. For both, Napoleon was a boyhood idol. No less than Morgan does Gates want to streamline corporate operations, and make profits predictable, and encourage a meritocratic reign of expertise, and generally tame chance; but Gates proposes to achieve this eschaton by harnessing a cybernetic demiurge rather than by invoking a set of economic principles. And like Morgan, Gates implicitly equates

the interests of his particular class with the interests of society at large.

But the differences between the men are as striking as their similarities. Consider their rhythms of everyday life. Morgan was manic-depressive. Like many elite Protestants in the late nineteenth century, he oscillated between periods of intense activity and protracted bouts of "nervous exhaustion," which conveniently enough for the patient often involved a sea voyage as a treatment. Morgan used his sanctioned leisure for travel, and eventually gave vent to his voracious appetite for *objets d'art*, accumulating the rare books, tapestries, altarpieces, paintings, and sculptures that became the basis for many collections in the Metropolitan Museum of Art as well as his own extraordinary library.

Gates's career, far from being characterized by periods of depression, seems energized by a sustained mania. There is a quality of protracted adolescence about the man: his idea of culture is *The Catcher in the Rye*, his idea of leisure is driving a Porsche at 120 miles an hour. Maybe by now he has begun to slow down, but it is difficult to imagine him embarking on a long sea voyage anytime soon.

There is a more dramatic contrast in their social visions. Morgan's vision of the American social order was hierarchical; he assumed that his place was at the top, and he took responsibility (according to his lights) for the economic well-being of the entire society. This paternalism allowed for at least a degree of pluralism in his conception of society. Morgan gradually and grudgingly acknowledged a role in public policy for representatives of groups other than his own: labor unions, farmers, even (eventually) government regulators. His search for stability preserved a sense of *noblesse oblige*.

Such a sentiment is not a part of Bill Gates's social perspective, despite the apparently noble intentions of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. There is no doubt that a lot of good can be done with \$17 billion, or that the Foundation's much-publicized focus on Third World

health and minority education indicates well-chosen priorities; and anyway there is the sensible old warning about inspecting gift horses too closely. Still, it is important to remember a few salient details. The Justice Department's anti-trust case against Microsoft has generated months of testimony detailing the company's bullying tactics, and even occasionally raising larger issues about the impact of corporate gatekeeping on freedom of cyberspeech. Gates badly needed a publicity boost, and, sure enough, his foundation has received bushels of benign

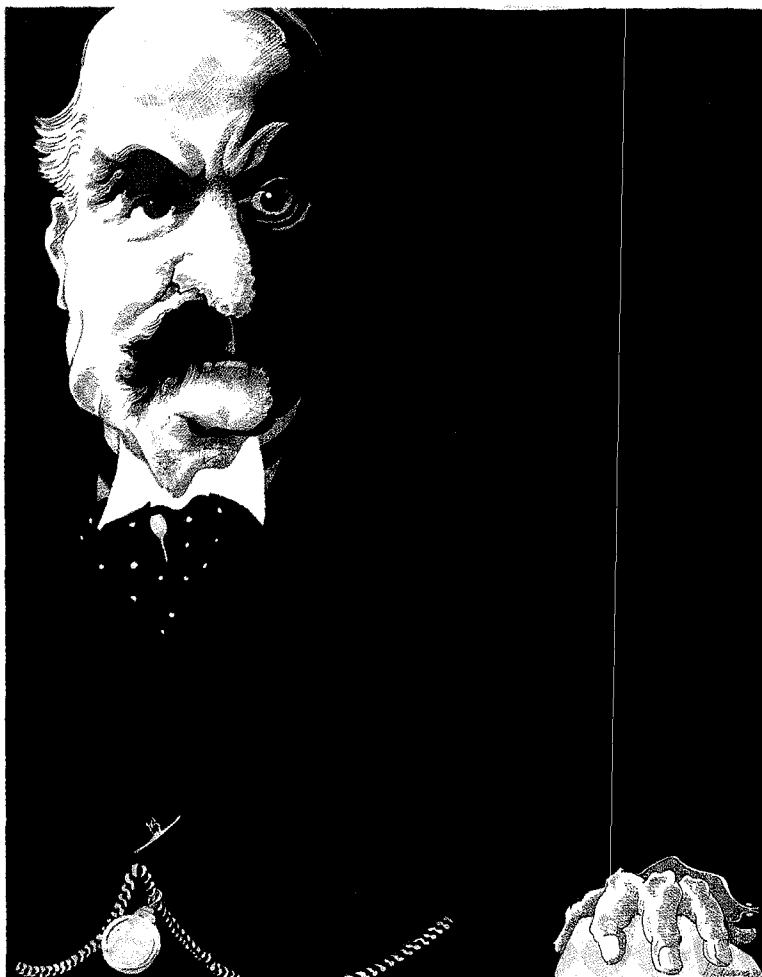
matters about the contrast between the two men is the difference in their worldviews. Morgan, the entitled patriarch, was eclectic in his acknowledgement of the interests of classes and groups other than his own, and in his tactile fascination with cultures other than his own. Gates's worldview is monochromatic by comparison. His commitment to "friction-free capitalism" has nothing to do with social responsibility. It is merely a fantasy of commercial harmony through applied technology. His hive-like vision of the future has no place for anyone except the (implicitly non-union) "knowledge worker." In the name of democratic empowerment, he offers a chilling utopian vision of uniformity—a high-tech monoculture that we will all happily embrace, whether we like it or not.

Morgan's picture of the world, though not as monolithic, may have been as oppressive in its endorsement of hierarchy. But there was a crucial distinction between his time and our own. At the turn of the century, there was a plethora of outsiders challenging *The Wall Street Journal's* definition of reality, and they had access to public debate. Today there are virtually none. Even journalists who should know better contribute to the illusion that Bill Gates's cyberworld constitutes our common experience.

James Gleick is a case in point. He is rightly alarmed by the spread of speed-worship, and willing to acknowledge (however briefly) the value of

stillness, and the need for taking thought. But those flickerings of doubt are lost amid a frenetic catalogue of the many electronic devices that "we" use to speed up our lives. A veritable orgy of the first person plural, *Faster* is full of blithe, uninformed assertions that reinforce the basic American myths of classlessness and choice, fostering the delusion that "the acceleration of just about everything" is a direct result of popular preference—rather than (at least in part) a consequence of the managerial drive for increased productivity.

Universalist rhetoric often conceals the narrowness of privilege. The Commerce



J. P. Morgan by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

coverage in the press. Along with vaccinations for Zimbabwe and scholarships for East St. Louis, moreover, another priority of the Gates Foundation is to ensure that every classroom in North America and every public library in the United States is connected to the Internet—and hence in need of Microsoft technology. That Bill Gates sure has a head for business.

My point is not to dismiss Gates's philanthropic impulses, or to compare them unfavorably to Morgan's. (The banker's projects were confined to culture, and his net worth was a tiny fraction of Gates's.) Philanthropists, like other human beings, act from mixed motives. And what really

Department recently reported that 67 percent of Americans do not use the Internet (or they use it very rarely), but you would never know this from the major media or from the pronouncements of Bill Gates. As the historian of technology Edward Tenner recently observed, the non-users are not simply poor folks who cannot afford to get connected; they are also people who *choose* not to embrace what Gates calls "the Web lifestyle." They make this choice not because they are afraid, and not because they are "losers," but because they prefer other forms of play, other kinds of communication, other styles of efficiency. For Gates, however, those who decide to remain outside the high-tech monoculture are simply invisible.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN Gates and Morgan illuminates a transformation of the ways that rich men legitimate their privilege in a putative democracy. Things have changed since the Morgan Era: a whole new ruling-class style has emerged. The preoccupation with character has yielded to the fascination with technique; stability has yielded to speed; paternalism has yielded to pseudo-populism; manic depression has yielded to peak performance; personal bulk has yielded to personal trainers.

Morgan and Gates epitomize the shift from Victorian capitalism to postmodern capitalism. Morgan's residence was a museum, but Gates's house is a "showcase for technology." In the Microsoft universe, the attachment to the past, to established social forms, is an unbearable burden; top hats and cutaways give way to T-shirts and Birkenstocks. According to Gates, this democratization of style reflects an actual democratization of power, generated by the empowering technology of a "digital nervous system." In his view, old assumptions of social hierarchy cannot withstand the egalitarian force of networked PC's. Morgan's "we" referred to the investing classes, to people like himself. Gates's "we" presumes to encompass everyone.

Yet Gates yokes this vision of consumer democracy to an irresistible technological determinism. He assumes that "we" are choosing exactly the future we want and that the same future has been fated to come into being by forces beyond our control. By implying that historical change occurs either through unconstrained choice or absolute necessity, this muddle obscures the role of debatable, reversible policy decisions in creating particular possibilities and outcomes.

A truer and more coherent account might acknowledge what everyone knows but few discuss publicly: that the direction of technological development is

shaped by the unequal distribution of wealth and power, and not simply by consumer demand or larger historical forces. The interests, the needs, and the values of investors shape research agendas more surely than popular preferences or the impersonal imperatives of science. Public investment can sometimes alter the agendas, but private capital is the key. Concentrated economic power points the path of progress. Class privilege matters. Morgan acknowledged and acted on this social fact; Gates conceals it in a flurry of counterfeit populist slogans.

Obfuscation comes easily to Gates. For all his technical expertise, he is more a salesman than an inventor. Nearly all of Gates's major achievements have involved appropriating the innovations of other people, then brilliantly mass-producing and marketing them. The vendor of virtual reality, Gates is the perfect business hero for a postmodern era. There is something more substantial about Morgan than Gates, and it involves more than girth or age.

III.

JEAN STROUSE'S BIOGRAPHY of Morgan, following hard on the heels of Ron Chernow's biography of John D. Rockefeller, has inspired the same nearly universal chorus of praise. The skeptical reader inevitably suspects that the two biographies are, among other things, zeitgeist books, evidence of the renewed reverence for business leaders that has come to characterize the money-culture of our time. The suspicion only deepens when Strouse announces in her introduction that, up to now, the populist and progressive critics of Morgan have won the fight over how to depict him, and that she intends to provide "a more realistic look" at the misunderstood titan.

With respect to the man himself, this strategy works well. Strouse shows that Morgan's power was partly rooted in his personal magnetism. According to the photographer Edward Steichen, meeting Morgan's gaze was like "looking into the lights of an oncoming express train." His ferocious eyes, his incredible intensity of concentration, distracted attention from his monstrous nose. It was, a woman friend remembered, "a Cyrano nose of vast blue oozing glands ... a hideous deformity." From his early fifties, Morgan was afflicted by rhinophyma, or excess sebaceous tissue—a condition that he never tried to have treated. The nose became his physiognomic trademark, and certainly proved no bar to the many women who craved his companionship. "I have never met anyone as attractive; one forgets the nose entirely after a few min-

utes," said Lady Victoria Sackville, one of his final flirtations.

Morgan's appetites were all gargantuan, and his contemporaries knew it. During one of Morgan's more audacious negotiations, Henry Adams commented that "Pierpont is trying to swallow the sun." What is remarkable is that, however grandiose the scheme, Morgan so often pulled it off. As Strouse shows, his success depended on his ability to inspire investor confidence by achieving consistent results.

Yet Strouse's admirable determination to see Morgan whole does not extend to his critics. Intellectuals, she complains, have formed a "tyranny of the articulate" that enables them to dominate the interpretation of the past, particularly the interpretation of inarticulate achievers such as Morgan. It is an interesting idea, and it may even may be true; but it does not justify her condescending treatment of egalitarian reformers, toward whom she is almost as dismissive as Morgan was. Populists, progressives, and socialists tend to appear in Strouse's narrative as "strident" critics at best, and at worst as deluded conspiracy-mongers.

Getting inside the mind of Morgan sometimes involves donning his class-blinders as well. Occasionally Strouse's volume reads like a society column; one soon grows weary of the long lists of notables at Morgan dinner parties, weddings, and funerals, of travel itineraries, enormous homes, and lavish purchases. The account of Morgan's later collecting career too often degenerates into a litany of he-bought-this, he-bought-that; and the relentless accumulation of things creates a feeling of surfeit.

Still, Strouse is too smart to be too sycophantic. Occasionally she does interpose the voices of radical protest amid scenes of complacent wealth. She notes the entanglement of Morgan's private interests in decisions that he claimed to make for the public good. And she acknowledges the ethical ambiguity created by a private citizen acting as the country's central banker. Her book is finally a judicious and strong biography, and it transforms this remote, inarticulate man into a fascinating, complicated, and sometimes even engaging figure.

MORGAN'S DIVIDED PSYCHE stemmed from familial roots. The Morgans of Hartford were competent, closeknit, and energetic. The Pierponts of Boston were feckless, impecunious, at odds with each other. They were also more fun for a child to visit. Young Morgan particularly enjoyed his grandfather, the playful Congregational minister John Pierpont, an abolitionist

and religious liberal who scandalized rural audiences with lectures on the fecundity of the Turkish harem. The Pierponts were also prone to depression.

John Pierpont Morgan was born in the panic year of 1837. His father Junius, having retreated from the "squally" financial weather on Wall Street, was a partner in a Hartford dry goods firm. The son was a sickly child, tormented by mysterious seizures until his late adolescence. Throughout his life he was convinced that some strange affliction had him in its grip, and if it disappeared in one form it would reappear in another. This may be one reason, Strouse suggests, that Morgan never had his rhinophyma removed surgically: he was afraid it would bring on a return of the seizures.

This was a zero-sum physiology, a physiology of scarcity that paralleled the scarcity economics of the nineteenth century (economic expansion is limited by the available gold reserves) as well as its scarcity psychology (nervous energy is limited by the available psychic reserves). All of these assumptions certainly helped to shape Morgan's habits of mind and body, not only his sound money principles but also his frequent long vacations, which were often justified as a means of regenerating his shattered nerves. This manic depressive rhythm was widespread among Morgan's class; it affected Morgan partners as well as intellectuals such as Henry Adams and William James. And it suggests a wide-ranging pattern of tensions in late Victorian culture between a drive for disciplined achievement and a longing for passive withdrawal—a psychic boom and bust to parallel the oscillations of the *laissez-faire* economy.

The Morgan family gave those tensions a local habitation and a name. Junius was obsessed with his son's character, constantly seeking ways to shape it properly—teaching the boy about business, overseeing his reading habits and his pocket change, providing him with glimpses of European history and culture, arranging the acquisition of foreign lan-

guages. His mother had little to do with him; she made nervous exhaustion a way of life, lapsing into invalidism and cranky self-absorption.

Young Pierpont navigated between them, enduring long absences in various boarding schools while his family moved from Hartford to Boston and his father became a rising star in the New England banking community. Pierpont's youthful diaries, Strouse reports, reveal "a young mind bent on order and control." He recorded the number of days past, the number of days to come in the year, places

but by faith in the atoning death of Christ. He was too much the worldly sensualist to epitomize the Protestant Ethic, as his contemporary Rockefeller did; but there is no question that Morgan, too, considered himself among the saved. For both men, Christianity validated wealth and power.

By the time he was nearing his majority, Morgan was already convinced that he inhabited a well-ordered cosmos, and that he might master it if he tried. Fortunately for him, his father's star had become visible in London, where the Bostonian George Peabody

owned a bank that was highly regarded by conservative investors. Peabody made it his business to certify the value of the securities that he underwrote. A bachelor, he needed an heir, and he picked Junius. At the time nobody realized that he had founded a dynasty.

When Pierpont was nineteen, Junius brought him into the firm by sending him to work as an unsalaried clerk at Peabody & Co.'s New York affiliate, Duncan, Sherman & Co. The weather on Wall Street soon became "squally" again. The boom of the 1850s, fueled by California gold and foreign investment in American railroads, began to collapse in the fall of 1857 when a ship carrying \$1.6 million in gold from San Francisco to New York sank in storm off Cape Hatteras. The American money supply contracted sharply. As stock prices fell, Peabody & Co. secured a timely bank loan to stave

off imminent failure; but American investors did not know this. Panic still threatened the firm until Pierpont hunted down a crucial cable confirming the loan and spread the news on Wall Street. The young man had shown that he could take control in a crisis. He was on his way.

IN AFFAIRS OF the heart, Morgan was not so fortunate. In 1860 he began courting the charming and lovely Amelia (Memie) Sturges. His headaches, depression, and nervous exhaustion magically subsided. But Memie soon fell victim to the virulent form of tuberculosis described by the Victorians as galloping



Bill Gates by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

resided, income and expenses, girls he liked, letters sent and received, including postage paid. All this, Strouse observes, may have been a defense against what he could not control: the family's constant moving, his mother's moods, his own seizures, acne, and rheumatic fever.

The diary also reveals another source of Morgan's order: his early faith in a personal savior, and the providential allotment of rewards and punishments in this world as well as the next. This has always been a comforting doctrine for the affluent. Morgan remained a devout Low Church Episcopalian all his life, convinced that salvation came not by works

consumption. Pierpont was determined to marry her anyway, and he did in October 1861. They were together constantly until she died the following February. He was inconsolable, and his health problems reappeared.

Gradually he returned to the New York social scene, and eventually he located another wife, Frances (Fanny) Tracy. She lacked Memie's effervescence, but she was attractive and agreeable. They were married in 1865, and babies followed in quick succession: a daughter, a son, and two more daughters. The couple soon discovered their incompatibilities. He was gregarious and fond of big social scenes; she was quiet and domestic, preferring intimate gatherings.

Both suffered depression; but her remedy was retreat (and eventually opium and morphine), and his remedy was a combination of social distraction and frequent spa visits. Soon the pattern of their life was established: Pierpont absented himself at Saratoga and other fashionable watering places for weeks at a time, lamenting his "loneliness" but insisting that it was his "duty" to preserve his health, even though it meant long separations from his growing family. Distance lent no enchantment, and the relationship became increasingly strained. As one of Fanny's nieces recalled, "she had a real talent for wounding him, though she probably had ... ample provocation." It was a fine summary of a sad mismatch.

IV.

WHEN MORGAN WAS not seeking spa cures, he was hard at work on Wall Street. More of a plunger than his father, he collaborated with his friend Edward Ketchum and briefly cornered the gold market in 1863; the two men netted \$66,000 apiece. Junius was outraged at his son's "gambling," but he need not have worried. Pierpont was no ordinary speculator, as Strouse emphasizes. From his early career on, he had an extraordinary grasp of international markets as well as local opportunities. His capacity to keep the big picture in focus reinforced his developing conviction that he and his father were engaged in public service.

It should come as no surprise, then, that when the Civil War broke out, "there was no question of his going" (according to Strouse), and no record of his thoughts on the New York draft riots or on his own decision to hire a substitute. "Both Morgans considered themselves patriots," Strouse writes, "high above the political fray, their sights trained on the nation's long-term progress." Service to the bank was a form of service to the Union. That

was the assumption behind Morgan's great work of the post-Civil War decades: the financing and stabilizing of the nation's astonishing industrial growth, especially its railroads.

In the Morgan view, the free market in railroads was too free; the field was cluttered by inferior players, sometimes nearly bankrupt and just limping along. The responsibility of the bankers was to discipline the industry by strengthening the lines that deserved strengthening, allowing them to eliminate or to absorb the weaker ones and confirming the "natural monopoly" of the most efficient road in a particular region. But railroads had a public character. They depended for their very existence on state charters, land grants and right-of-way; they constituted the common arteries of transport for the entire nation. Should such an obviously public resource be under the control of private bankers? Critics wondered. The question never crossed Morgan's mind.

He developed an organizational method so innovative and ingenious that it became known as "Morganization." Strouse summarizes it deftly, with respect to Morgan's creation of the Southern Railway. Morganization involved shifting the balance of a firm's securities from debt to equity, from mortgage bonds requiring annual interest payments to stocks that depend on company earnings. To per-

suade investors to trade in their safe, high-interest notes for riskier equity instruments, the Morgan bankers offered preferred stocks, which took precedence over common stocks: the railway company had to pay dividends on the preferred stock first, at a specified rate. The Morgan syndicate took its own payments in common stock, indicating Morgan's confidence in the railroad's long term profitability.

As he aged and eventually supplanted his father in the firm, Morgan grew more conservative with respect to risk. Emulating his father's admonition of "masterly inactivity" during periods of frenzied finance, Pierpont cabled his London partners during the pre-election tumult of 1884: "stock market in hands of gamblers, public hold aloof—it is good time keep entirely quiet." By the 1890s, he had acquired more authority than any banker before or since.

In the corridors of power, Morgan was hailed as a national economic savior. This was a role that he would repeatedly play in times of economic crisis: the "rich man's panic" of 1884, the gold shortage of the 1890s, the near-crash of 1907. Whatever the details, the pattern was the same. Morgan would call the big players together, persuade them to kick in the necessary capital to shore up the money supply, preserve liquidity, reassure inves-



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tors, and stop the fever from spreading.

Often the big players included presidents of the United States. Morgan got along fine with them, until Theodore Roosevelt came up with the awkward idea that Washington and Wall Street might represent different constituencies. In 1902, when Roosevelt brought an anti-trust suit against one of Morgan's recent creations, the Northern Securities Railway Company, the banker feared the worst. But Roosevelt waffled: even as he prosecuted the Northern Securities case, he urged Morgan to organize a giant shipping trust. Morgan, meanwhile, helped Roosevelt to end the coal strike of 1902, by persuading the mineowners to accept arbitration. Northern Securities was eventually broken up, but Morgan had helped to promote a more productive relationship among business, labor, and government. For all his limitations, the man had a sense of public responsibility. It was class-bound and unarticulated, but it was genuine.

STILL, THE QUESTION remained: should so much power be concentrated in one man's hands? The old republican tradition had fostered popular suspicion of such arrangements; and vestiges of that tradition survived in the populist and progressive suspicion of Morgan and the "money trust." After Morgan had financed the creation of the U.S. Steel Corporation in 1902, the humorist Finley Peter Dunne caught some of the popular sense of Morgan's power. According to Dunne's fictional Irish saloonkeeper, Mr. Dooley: "Pierpont Morgan calls in wan iv his office boys, th' präsident iv a national bank, an' says he, 'James,' he says, 'take some change out iv th' damper and r-run out an' buy Europe f'r me,' he says, 'I intind to re-organize it an' put it on a paying basis,' he says." There were times, indeed, when Morgan's power seemed unlimited. As the *New York Post* observed in an obituary: "it will never do to say that unchecked power is a good thing because it is in the hands of good men."

A more insidious problem was Morgan's tendency to wrap particular interests in a universalist vocabulary. Consider the debate on the gold standard. During the gold crisis in 1895, he cabled his brother-in-law: "We all have large interests dependent on maintenance sound currency U.S." The first person plural did not include the debtor classes, the millions of farmers and workers suffering the effects of tight money and prolonged depression. To Morgan, as Strouse observes, their distress was simply a "side effect" of the business cycle, a "transitional" phase en route to a sounder economy.

It may be that the debtors' criticism of

"sound money" was naïve or shortsighted, given the Olympian vantage of a Morgan (and the dependence of nineteenth-century American development on foreign capital.) Still, one may be permitted some skepticism regarding rich people's reverence for abstract market forces. The least powerful are always those who are most severely punished by the "transition;" and the most powerful are always staked for the long run—in which, as Keynes justly observed, we are all dead. A more humane public policy might operate in a shorter term as well, might balance economic considerations with social and moral concerns.

The problem was not the gold standard itself, but the assumption of Morgan and his colleagues that it existed in an abstract realm of "natural law," beyond politics. In fact, decisions regarding the money supply were (and are) profoundly political: they involve the perennial conflict in all market democracies between maintaining investor confidence and promoting economic justice. Keynes would explore that conflict two decades after Morgan's death, releasing it from the realm of natural law into the practical world of politics. But in Morgan's time (and since), elite assumptions about economic laws discouraged any government attempt to intervene in the allegedly impersonal process of accumulation.

MORGAN HIMSELF WAS a champion accumulator—of yachts, country estates, midtown Manhattan properties, and mistresses. His social set resembled the British aristocracy in its tolerance for extramarital wanderings by both sexes. Beginning in his early fifties, Morgan began an erotic career remarkable even by aristocratic standards. He conducted a long affair with Edith Randolph, the widow of a British army captain, and a longer one with Adelaide Douglas, the wife of a leisure-class Long Island yachtsman. But there were countless others. His preference, according to Strouse, was for "bright, self-possessed women with a touch of champagne in their veins"—sharp contrasts to the unfortunate Fanny, who continued to sink into isolation and depression.

As much or more than he wanted women, Morgan craved rare and luxurious things. This passion took him outside the circles of the philistine rich, into a transatlantic *beau monde* where he met some interesting characters: the fastidious and disdainful art critic Roger Fry, who in Strouse's view typified "the tyranny of the articulate"; the equally haughty Bernard Berenson, who dismissed Morgan's house as "a pawnbroker's shop for

Croesus"; and the exotic, mysterious Belle da Costa Greene, who took charge of the Morgan Library during the old man's declining years. The daughter of the first black man to graduate from Harvard, Greene reinvented herself and passed for white; she became Berenson's lover and Morgan's confidante. Among her tasks was scheduling his trysts to keep the "dames" from bumping into each other.

The perceptive, irreverent Greene posed a sharp contrast to the stuffy conventionality that surrounded Morgan. His son Jack, to whom he never showed much more than benign indifference, turned out to be just the sort of upper-class twit that Morgan himself disliked: purse-proud, snobbish, anglophilic, anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism was spreading among WASP elites at the turn of the century, and Morgan himself caught the virus. In 1904, the British banker John Baring left a meeting with Morgan and wrote that Morgan had "inveighed bitterly against the growing power of the Jews and the Rockefeller crowd, and said more than once that our firm and his were the only two composed of white men in New York." Morgan's meritocratic instincts contended with his conventional ethnocentrism.

MORGAN NEVER MELLOWED. He ran from pillar to post all his life. "He is the most *exhausting* person I know," Belle Greene wrote. His attachment to stability did not extend to his personal life. He was constantly in motion, blowing like a gale through the lives of his associates. His appetites were insatiable—for food, sex, possessions, power, action, and then on to the next event, in restless perpetuity. All this scurrying about sometimes betrayed a quality of desperate, unfulfilled longing—inevitable, perhaps, in a man of Morgan's wants. Greene noted the "utter *loneliness*" of his life; his protégé and close friend, the Social Gospel minister William Rainsford, recalled Morgan's occasional "fits of despairing despondency," when he clung to the minister for reassurance. An extraordinarily reserved man with "few inner resources" (as Strouse observes), Morgan may have been in manic flight from nothingness. E. M. Forster thought so: "If you could pierce through him, you'd find panic and emptiness in the middle." Maybe Forster was just another articulate tyrant, pretending to profundity; or maybe he was onto something.

Morgan embodied the narrowness of his class, but he also fitfully transcended it. His final public performance was his appearance in December 1912 before the Pujo Committee, in a Congressional investigation of the "money trust." Grilled

by the committee counsel Samuel Untermyer, Morgan issued a series of opaque pronouncements that delighted the financial press and baffled the rest of the country. A few months later he was dead. What was probably a series of small strokes reduced him to helpless passivity and paranoia before finally killing him. A young American woman named Florence Blair implicitly blamed Untermyer: "To think of the smallness of that horrid little Jew to cause so much trouble and ignominy for the most respected people." This was the American ruling class at its worst, and it was a huge part of the constituency that Morgan represented.

Yet even this woman glimpsed Morgan's larger significance when she added: "He was a great deal more than just a private citizen, wasn't he?" He was. He knew that he was a public character, and claimed that if he had his nose fixed, he would be the butt of every newsboy in New York. But he also had a sense of public responsibility. Just before his final decline, the feeble old man asked his friend George Harvey, the editor of *Harper's*, to convey a message to the newly elected President Wilson. Morgan, no Democrat, had opposed Wilson, but now he asked Harvey to tell the president that "if there should ever come a time when he thinks any influence or resources that I have can be used by the country, they are wholly at his disposal."

V.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to imagine Bill Gates making a similar gesture. This is not merely because his company is involved in an antitrust suit with the Justice Department. It is also a function of his historical moment. Gates has risen to power at a time in our history when almost no one with any prominence seems able to imagine a public interest that transcends the expansion of private capital. Free market fundamentalism imprisons the policy debate, and hostility to "big government" is all the rage.

This attitude is nothing new in corporate circles, but it is strikingly ironic in the computer business. Few industries in our history have been more dependent on public investment. The conceptual basis for the original internet PC, as even Gates acknowledges in passing, was created by Vannevar Bush, director of the U.S. Office of Scientific Research and Development during World War II. The shift from mechanical to electronic data processing and the fashioning of a "World Wide Web" of shared information were Pentagon priorities in the postwar decades. Thirty years of government-backed research eventually provided the foundation for a

bonanza of private profit. In this and other matters, however, contemporary entrepreneurial mythology promotes historical amnesia.

Gates is a leading force for forgetfulness. Born in 1955, the son of a well-connected Seattle attorney, he soon revealed the traits that would prove essential to his success. According to Stephen Manes and Paul Andrews in *Gates*, the best available biography, he was "a high-energy kid" with a gee-whiz enthusiasm for technology that kept him returning to the Seattle World's Fair in 1962. Like Morgan, he loved to organize things, and in elementary school he would doggedly work through recess tracing lost books for the librarian. He was, a friend recalled, "a nerd before the term was even invented." Appropriately enough, his favorite game was Risk, "the board game of world domination."

What distinguished him most was his obsessive focus. He kept his attention riveted on specific goals—such as learning how to leap out of a trash can—long after everyone else had abandoned them. Restless and bored in public school, he was sometimes a source of worry to his parents. In 1968 they transferred him to the private Lakeside School, where Gates quickly discovered something more substantial than trash cans to focus his atten-

tion. It was an ASR-33 teletype machine connected by modem to a General Electric main frame computer; the main frame used a "language" called BASIC, or Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. Gates was no ordinary beginner. With a handful of other math-science adepts, he spent most spare moments in the Lakeside "computer room," and eventually in various similar rooms throughout the city, though he took enough time off to teach himself to become an acrobatic water skier. A high-tech center with a lot of energetic young researchers dashing about (and a lot of water), Seattle was a good place for a "high energy kid" to hone his skills.

But Harvard was not such a good place. It forced Gates for the first time to confront some of his limitations. He contracted colitis; he felt confused, unhappy, even fitfully humbled. Still, he managed a decent academic record despite spending most of his time in the computer center. Math was his mistress. His social life consisted of a sizable collection of *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, and regular visits to Boston's Combat Zone, a haven of pornography and prostitution. He rarely changed clothes or used sheets on his bed, where according to Manes and Andrews, a friend "once found him slumbering, fully clothed, mumbling 'one,

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comma, one, comma, one' as if dreaming mathematics."

At the end of his freshman year, he and his Lakeside friend Paul Allen were already, as Gates recalled, "thinking we'd get a job, maybe take a year off and get a job together." In high school they had started a company they called Traf-o-Data, dedicated to manufacturing and marketing a computer with the single purpose of counting cars. Traf-o-Data limped along for years. What made it fascinating to Gates was not the financial returns, which were never more than minimal, but the main technical problem that it posed: how to marry hardware and software—a workable minicomputer with a faster, more flexible version of BASIC.

The hardware could be acquired from one of the dozens of small firms racing to be the first to put "a computer in every home." The software Gates would work on himself. This project took on a life of its own, and eventually it lured Gates away from Harvard (where he had loosened up enough to become a "clubbable nerd," according to Manes and Andrews). At the end of his junior year, in 1976, Gates left Cambridge for Albuquerque, to head a company that he called "Micro-soft."

THE HYPHEN DISAPPEARED after a few months, and the company forged forward, moving from Albuquerque to Seattle in 1978, harnessing the collective energy of talented programmers. The college dropout wanted to create a college atmosphere at Microsoft—he is at least partly to blame for the now-ubiquitous euphemism "corporate campus"—but the work requirements at Microsoft were uniquely demanding. They were geared to the furious pace set by the founder, whose only recreation was roaring around the desert in fast cars. He lost at least one girlfriend because of his insistence on a seven-hour turnaround between departing work at night and returning the next morning.

To his employees, he was no paternalist. He was intolerant, abrasive, dismissive. (His favorite comment is "That's the stupidest thing I ever heard!") He cut corners on labor costs relentlessly; even Manes and Andrews acknowledge that he was "tightfisted beyond the boundaries of the law." He failed to pay overtime to his clerical workers. When one staffer discovered and demanded the back pay owed her and others, the outraged Gates fumed for days.

He tried similar but more sophisticated tricks with his programmers. Many were annoyed, some left, most stayed. To those who shared his enthusiasms, however, his intensity was infectious. The programmers marvelled at his "intellectual bandwidth" with respect to technical issues;

talking to him, the cliché went, was like "drinking from a firehose." Times had changed since Morgan's day: no breakdowns, and no long sea voyages for the Microsoft crew. The Victorian pattern had given way to a stress on incessant "peak performance." If Morgan was manic depressive, Gates was simply manic.

The breakthrough for Microsoft came in 1980, when Gates and his colleagues engineered an arrangement that would create a flood of revenues for the company. Microsoft acquired the right to license Seattle Computer's 86-DOS (disk operating system), which the company renamed MS-DOS. Gates then offered a package deal to IBM, the disk operating system along with all the "languages" Microsoft had acquired over the years—BASIC, FORTRAN, COBOL, and PASCAL—in exchange for a huge bundle of advances, royalties, and licensing fees. IBM agreed. From then on, every IBM and IBM-compatible PC would carry Microsoft software. Here was the proverbial cash cow. Windows, the great Apple knock-off, was waiting in the wings. Gates, like Morgan, was about to try swallowing the sun—and to come at least as close to success.

UNLIKE MORGAN, HOWEVER, Gates has a sense of himself as a social visionary, and he has tried to articulate his vision in two bestselling books. *The Road Ahead*, which appeared in 1995, was his paean to the "information superhighway" and its alleged production of "friction-free capitalism." Gates envisioned a state of perfect harmony created by internet technology—a world of satisfied customers and happy workers, where desire meets fulfillment with the click of a mouse.

Gates's new book addresses a more specialized management audience, stressing intra-net communications within organizations as well as web-based networks. Yet the same fundamental contradiction characterizes this book and the previous one: the yoking of tough techno-determinism ("Evolve to add value or die") with the smiley-face affirmation of freedom ("When it comes to workstyle, the choice will be the worker's.") Between technology and the individual, there is no middle term, no political realm where people can debate the question: is this what we want?

There are many reasons to want networked PC's, and there are many ways in which a "digital nervous system" can improve people's lives: speeding responses to customer queries; facilitating scholarship; promoting collaboration in scientific research; streamlining emergency medical treatment. Who could argue with such goals? But like most techno-millen-

nialists, Gates is less interested in specific improvements than in sweeping assertions.

What really sets his pulse racing is the old managerial dream of a smoothly functioning system. Like Morgan, he wants to minimize risk and to control a steady stream of profitability, to ensure that the company is "MAKING AN INVESTMENT, NOT RELYING ON LUCK." McDonald's, the hamburger joint, is one of Gates's success stories. The fast food chain is using PC and Web technology to "tally sales at all of its restaurants in real time. As soon as you order two Happy Meals, a McDonald's marketing manager will know," Gates reports breathlessly. Not everyone will be excited by this news.

ALL THE OLD tensions and frustrations associated with market exchange melt away in the world of friction-free capitalism. "Haggling over price will become effortlessly electronic," Gates predicts. (Of course, he admits, you might want to stroll down to your local Toyota dealer and actually lay eyes on the product before you buy it on the net.) Even the ever-receding "paperless office" gets called out for an encore. (Don't worry, he says, this time it really *is* just around the corner.)

For Gates, the thrill lies not in the things themselves—McDonald's hamburgers, Hampton Inn motel rooms, Nabisco lemon cookies—but in the process of marketing them, and the efficiency with which it is done. Like so many contributors to contemporary management literature, he habitually invokes the mantra of change and speed: "If the 1980s were about quality, and the 1990s were about reengineering, then the 2000s will be about velocity." This means that "you either move with speed or you die," as the chairman of Lucent Technologies announces in an epigraph. Such demented dualism afflicts college professors as well as corporate executives, but the executives can use it to shape people's lives.

The corporate leaders' reverence for speed is embedded in the technological determinism that animates their vision of progress; it complements the "just-in-time" delivery systems and other management innovations designed to pick up the pace of business transactions. The obvious point of such strategies is to reach your customers before your competitors reach them. For Gates and his corporate colleagues, however, speed-worship transcends salesmanship. It is a way of life.

This is where the utopian vision of Gates begins to turn sinister. Dramatic rises in productivity, driven by techno-

logical innovation, have lifted American business to the top of the world market; but still one is entitled to ask if there are limits to doing more work in less time. If software allows an architect to turn out six drawings in the time that he used to produce one drawing, the firm also expects him to manage six times as many projects at once. But there is a problem. Drawing can be done with a computer. Project management cannot be done with a computer; it requires the architect's presence on the site. In this case, computer-assisted design raises unrealistic expectations of productivity in all aspects of the job. The human dimensions of work cannot always be shackled to cyber-standards of speed. Quality suffers; imagination flags; the body itself rebels.

WHETHER THE REST of the population shares the executive zest for acceleration is an open question. Certainly James Gleick thinks so. His book is an appropriately hectic and superficial survey of the many recent innovations that have intensified the pace of life: remote control television, cellular phones, microwave ovens, e-mail, and other digital procedures that allow simultaneous communication and data processing. His explanation for these changes follows the familiar recipe: a dash of determinism (technology holds us helplessly in its grasp) in a stew of consumer democracy (we love this stuff). As always, this combination obscures more than it illuminates.

After discussing the triumph of Taylorism—the hierarchical management system for economizing time and motion—Gleick asserts that “we have learned to keep efficiency in mind as a goal, which means that we drive ourselves hard.” The idea that there might be differences of opinion on this subject, or that some powerful people might be imposing their obsessions on other less powerful ones, seems not to have occurred to Gleick. His notion of historical causation is a continued invocation of the first person plural: “we have made our choices and continue to make them.”

Gleick is not himself a speed-worshiper, and his book is supposed to sound a warning; but Gates would find Gleick's idiom congenial. If there is a word that Gates likes more than “speed,” it is “empowerment.” Incorporating a digital nervous system, he tells his executive readers, “allows you to empower as many of your workers as possible.” Employees will cheer as boring, repetitive “task work” gives way to exciting, creative “knowledge work.” This is no fantasy, Gates insists. No matter how sophisticated the techniques for mining and manipulating data

become, they will always require thoughtful analysis and decision-making. Rather than the regimentation imagined by technophobes, the “web workstyle” offers unprecedented autonomy to those with the appropriate skills. This argument ignores the ways that market pressures can undermine autonomy (as in the architecture firm.) Many of Gates's particular claims may well be justified. The larger problem lies in their universalist sweep. For all his talk of choice, he is more authoritarian than pluralist. He simply cannot imagine life beyond the Web; he cannot envision people who prefer to work and play in other ways.

NOR CAN GATES admit that there may be losers as well as winners in the corporate march of progress. “Task workers will go away,” he writes. (Where to? Mozambique? Tahiti?) “Their jobs will be automated or combined into bigger tasks requiring knowledge work.” To be sure, he admits, “as companies redefine themselves, some people will be dislocated.” This begins the characteristic rhetorical move in progressive thought: the dismissal of social disruption as merely “transitional.” This sounds easy enough in the executive suite; but the “transition,” with all its messiness and uncertainty, is where most people actually live, not in the shiny cyberfuture.

Not to worry, says Gates. “By and large the changes in organizational structure will empower good employees.” Those who have been behaving themselves will have nothing to fear. What looks like a dislocation is actually an opportunity to redefine career goals, to find a more congenial organization, to start your own business. “People who want to work for a big company will, and people who don't want to will have interesting alternatives.”

Downsized? Feeling blue? Pull up your socks, and get on the Web! “With the Web, becoming a free agent is no longer limited to athletes, artists, actors, and other big-name creative types. It's now available to almost every kind of knowledge worker.” Job insecurity is simply not an issue. And one benefit of free agency is “diversification—you're less likely to be out of work if you have several employers than if you have one.” As far as I can tell, this ludicrous reassurance is not a clumsy attempt at irony. I think that Gates is dead serious.

Reducing positive thinking to absurdity, Gates plays endless variations on the theme of unlimited choice. The digital nervous system empowers consumers as well as workers. Like Michael Hammer, the author of *Re-engineering the Corporation*, and the other management theorists whom he so often quotes, Gates endlessly emphasizes the hegemony of the custo-

mer in the wired world. The idea of consumer sovereignty is as old as Adam Smith, but Gates and company treat it as their own creation—or the Web's. As Gates writes, “the Web produces a true consumer-centric world.” With customized software, at Merrill Lynch and elsewhere, “everybody feels that the system is tuned for him or her.” Feelings of empowerment can substitute for actualities: “targeted ads should make consumers happy.” Personalized marketing will replace mass marketing, as manufacturers tailor their products to meet individual needs. You want a special tilt to that steering wheel on your Saturn? Just click on “steering” and follow the menu!

IT IS DIFFICULT to deny that Web technology can promote specific improvements in commercial transactions. Yet Gates is not selling merely an assortment of techniques. He is selling a way of life. His description of a few moments in a hyper-organized “web lifestyle” captures the details of his millennial dream. “When you leave the office for the day, your personal digital companion will download your e-mail, which might include a grocery list from your spouse. At the store, you can download a new recipe from a kiosk, which adds to your grocery list all the items you would need to use the recipe. . .” And so on. For all its apparent novelty, the description recalls the enduring managerial faith that everyday life can be systematically controlled through technology.

The Web lifestyle transcends the boundaries of commerce, spreading empowerment wherever it appears. It “puts you in charge of your own health,” allowing you to keep up with the latest developments in breast cancer or diabetes research. And it transforms politics. “Most people,” Gates writes, not only “want to find the best price for a product,” but also to “be up-to-date on the important issues affecting their national or local communities.”

This linking of politics with consumerism is not accidental. For Gates, democracy has nothing to do with vigorous debate between conflicting interest groups; it is simply a matter of efficiently taking the pulse of the people. Thus, in the Web-based polity of the future, “electronic kiosks that function like bank ATMs will ensure that every citizen will participate equally in the new way of working with government.” This is the pseudo-democracy of pollsters and marketers, for whom government is simply another vendor of services, participation means involvement in opinion surveys, and equality can be produced with the click of a mouse.

With technology as a *deus ex machina*,

thorny problems can be solved by mere assertion. The specter of unwanted surveillance can always be exorcised by a quick techno-fix. To protect private information about yourself, get a "smart card" and a Personal Identification Number. To equalize educational opportunity, make "a virtual world of experience... available to all connected students." With widespread "distance learning," we can close the knowledge gap—provided we forget that distance learning is to learning as phone sex is to sex.

GATES'S TECHNOPHILIA conceals the fundamental shallowness of his model of human nature. Like other business thinkers, he views human beings as bundles of "interests," which can be disassembled and addressed individually by marketers. The model is flat, utilitarian, and mechanistic, and it allows him to dismiss serious criticism in a sentence. "A lot of people fear that computers and the Internet will depersonalize experience, creating a world that is less warm and fuzzy," he writes, caricaturing a complex cultural criticism as infantile sentimentality.

Far from isolating you, Gates observes, "the Web lets you join communities across the globe and provides the opportunity to strengthen connections in your own backyard." Behind the bromides there is an element of truth, as any e-mailer knows, but Gates's definition of community is elastic enough to stretch into meaninglessness. Consider, for example, the Web site of Geffen Records: "To build a community, the site offers discussion groups for fans and a 24-hour response to e-mail queries." Pretty intense community, man.

Gates's utopian cyberfuture raises fundamental questions about concentrated power in a democracy. The dream of digital consumption provokes the critique of mass culture now largely discredited by postmodern pseudopopulists. Despite all Gates's talk of empowered consumers, images of isolated and distracted consumption regenerate themselves in his prose. "During the Emmy Awards in September of 1998," Gates writes, "consumers could access additional information on award categories and nominees, experience live on-scene video and audio, catch behind-the-scenes interviews, and participate in trivia quizzes, interactive fan balloting, and chat rooms." Digital television, in short, sounds like a fifty-megaton weapon of mass distraction. (Note also Gates's use of the verb "experience" to denote the very opposite of experience.)

There is no point in trundling out all the old Frankfurt School artillery: the disdain for the intelligence of ordinary folk, the manipulative model of top-

down domination. Those theoretical assumptions have been properly questioned. But there is certainly some point in reflecting on centralized corporate power, and how it may subvert the democratizing potential of Web technology. One of the issues involved in Microsoft's bid for monopoly involves the company's largely successful effort to install its search engine in 90 percent of the world's computers. Search engines control access to information; they channel the flow. The entries that appear at the top of a citation list (which in its entirety could include thousands) are far more likely to be tapped by a researcher. Surely the potential power of a single company to serve as information gatekeeper—its capacity to restrain the trade in ideas—is a legitimate cause for public concern.

And so there are instructive parallels between the Microsoft case and the anti-

trust battles of the Morgan era. Like the railroads, the Internet has a public character; its development was funded by thirty years of tax revenues; it is filled with major arteries of commerce and ideas. Like Morgan, Gates has become a political figure—not merely because he has been dragged kicking and screaming into federal court, but because his business has an impact on the commonweal.

Morgan conceived it as his duty to control that impact. His patriotism was rooted in his paternalism, in his sense that the rich were different from ordinary people in their responsibilities as well as their privileges. But Gates denies that difference, obscuring class divisions in a utopian fantasy of mass empowerment, reducing the future to a facile advertisement for Microsoft technology. It may be time to ask a political question: Is this what we want? ■

Angels Arrive

By HILLEL HALKIN

Paper Bridges:
Selected Poems of Kadya Molodowsky
translated, introduced, and edited
by Kathryn Hellerstein

(Wayne State University Press, 543 pp., \$29.95)

IN HER BOOK of Yiddish poems, *Dzshike Street*, which appeared in 1933, Kadya Molodowsky has a sequence of five poems called "Jeremiah." This is the first of them, excellently translated by Kathryn Hellerstein:

When my heart grows so full of
heaviness
That my legs can't hold my body
any more,
I want to fall onto my hands and knees,
Howling windily, down on all fours
Like an animal that knows not why
Or for whom—
It's then, like milk upon the lips,
That several names come:
The first one is sweet—Jeremiah.
His body, like a tree burned through
by thunder,
Is blackened and wasted,
With lips that have not drunk any sun

But bitter water.
His arms—opened their full length
with the wind
In eternal asking, a refrain,
Like branches needing to blossom
That wait for rain.

"Burned," "blackened," "wasted," "bitter"—and "sweet"? But Jeremiah must have been especially dear to Molodowsky. Like her, he did not ask to be a poet. "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child," he protests when informed of the mission for which he has been chosen—to which comes God's answer: "Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak."

Born in a Belorussian shtetl in 1894, Molodowsky was trained as a Hebrew-language kindergarten teacher. Although she had written poetry both for herself and the children she taught, Hellerstein's introduction tells us, she never thought of it as a vocation until 1920, when she was discovered and published by a group of Yiddish writers in Kiev. It was a heady

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time for Yiddish poetry, which had lagged behind Yiddish prose in its development. (The vernacular tongue of East European Jewry, Yiddish was first used for serious fiction in the 1870s by the great comic writer Mendele Moykher Seforim, who was followed in the late 1880s by Sholem Aleichem and I.L. Peretz.)

Barely in existence as a serious literary form only two decades earlier, Yiddish verse had now established vigorous centers of accomplished modernism in America, in Poland, and in the Soviet Union, where young talents such as Jacob Glatstein, Moyshe-Leyb Halpern, Melech Ravitch, Anna Morgolin, Peretz Markish, Moyshe Kulbak, and many others were at the beginning of their careers. "Realizing that her poems were now a part of a public discourse," Hellerstein writes, "Molodowsky developed standards for judging and revising her own work."

THOSE STANDARDS WERE high, and made her a wonderful poet. Still, one finds in her verse the sometimes whimsical and sometimes melancholy suggestion that she is just an ordinary woman whom life, or some power beyond life, has seduced into a career of poetry. In two other poems in *Dzshike Street*, the imagery from "Jeremiah" recurs, this time applied to herself. One of them, "A Letter," begins,

Write such long, long letters to me,
Make the distance between us so great
That the way I appear—for God,
against people—
Will not cause you more regret,

and continues in the third of its four quatrains:

I sometimes forget my city, my name.
I stand before God, a stripped tree,
my face
Uplifted like a thirsty leaf
To sun, to wind, and to grace.

The other poem is called "I Still Don't Have a Gray Hair, Not a One":

I still don't have a gray hair, not a one,
But I'm commonplace enough,
like everyone,
My shoulders sway and rock as if
wind-beaten
At night when I sit crying for no reason.
My legs still are like the firm trunks
of trees,
And my arms, like branches bending
in the breeze,
Then why do my brows frequently
sink down,
And my lips purse in silence with
a frown?

I'm over thirty—a thought of
consternation—
The very middle of our generation,
Like flocks of swallows they'll rise up—
the young—
To shun me like the grandfathers
I've shunned.

"For behold I have made thee this day a defended city and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land," Jeremiah is told. Molodowsky had surrendered her commonplaceness to what Harold Bloom has called "the poet's agon," and clearly she felt that her surrender had its price.

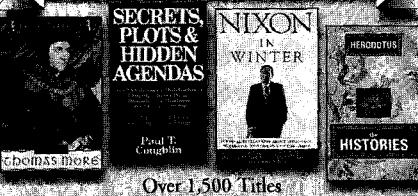
A PART OF THE price on which she may not have reckoned in 1933 is the vicissitudes of poetry in translation, especially for a Yiddish poet who today can be read in her own language by only a dwindling number of readers—and most especially for a Yiddish poet such as Molodowsky, who made extensive use of rhyme, the Achilles' heel of every verse translator. Hellerstein can be quite good with Molodowsky's rhymes, particularly when she slant-rhymes them with couples like "...wind-beaten/...for no reason" that allow her to sound natural while remaining close to the sense and diction of the original; but she is less successful when striving for full rhyme. "A thought of consternation," for example, is not only awkward English, it is pitched wrong for the Yiddish *shver iz gleybn*, which simply means "it is hard to believe."

Molodowsky herself, it is true, loved to defy the conventional wisdom that, apart from light verse and children's verse, rhyme should be a function of meaning rather than the other way around; but her rhymes are never sloppy or forced. They are at their sharpest when she most plays up their arbitrariness, pairing off the Germanic, Hebrew, and Slavic components of Yiddish in improbable combinations, and picking up speed and direction from them like a skater pushing off on a skate. Occasionally this gives her verse a clowning quality that seems to say: "Look at me! I may not have asked to be a poet but I sure can rhyme on a dime—and a good thing, too, for how else would I get from here to there?"

Even when this is not the case, many of Molodowsky's poems have a strong sense of contingency, a sometimes self-reflective awareness that, had a different rhyme or image occurred to her, they might have ended up somewhere else. Thus, in a little torch song in *Dzshike Street*, Molodowsky writes:

You leave. I can't recall the streets, alas,
And those I recognize are strange, inert.

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The first line can be rhymed with
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 The second with a shirt.
 But I don't want to rhyme —
 For you don't love me. I'm sad all the
 time,
 As if the sun had set for years and years
 today,
 As if a field ceased rustling its cornstalks
 and hay.
 But I don't want a simile,
 I'm sad because you don't love me.

Here, though, Hellerstein slips badly, for “alas” and “inert,” added lamely for the rhyme (the original Yiddish has neither), obscure the poet’s wry, sly point: that while the poet’s first two lines have come to her with a flawless spontaneity, she flounders the moment she tries turning them into the “public discourse” of formal verse, and yet this floundering is itself mere theater, the teasing stumble of a skater who then triumphantly glides away under perfect control. Moreover, Hellerstein’s “hay” is similarly tacked on to Molodowsky’s “cornstalks,” and rhyming “time” with “rhyme” reverses the syntax of the Yiddish *es iz mir umetik vos du host mikh nisht lieb*, “I’m sad because you don’t love me,” so that, encountering the line again at the poem’s end, we fail to recognize that it is being repeated verbatim.

This is a favorite technique of Molodowsky’s. As in a rondel, she often circles back to her beginnings in her endings. She can thus give a poem a satisfying sense of completeness while at the same time feigning the helplessness of having begun it, lost confidence in how to proceed, and scrambled back to the safety of her starting point. Throughout her work strength masquerades as frailty and frailty as strength, the “I cannot speak for I am a child” of Jeremiah with his brassy walls.

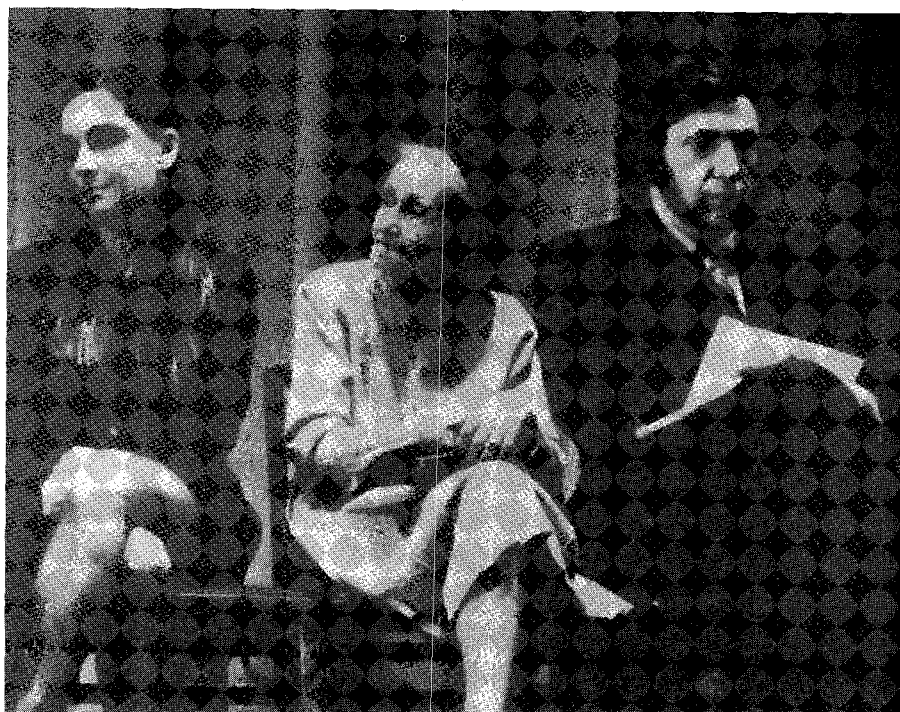
CHILDHOOD IS A frequent subject in Molodowsky’s poetry. The tone in which it is written about, when not the playful one of the children’s verse that she continued to write all her life, is wistful and grieving—an extended elegy for the innocence, the brightness of vision, the protective warmth and love of parents, the trust in the new and unchanged world to which a child wakes every morning for all the things that a happy childhood (as hers appears to have been) does not let us take with us. And mixed with this elegy is a heavy burden of guilt: about those left behind to face catastrophe in Europe, from which Molodowsky emigrated to New York in 1935, and about the father and mother from whose traditional Judaism her bohemian life and her left-wing sympathies distanced her. A fine poem

called “My Father’s Fur Coat” that appears in *Freydke*, a collection published several years after *Dzshike Street*, reads in Hellerstein’s translation:

Remember your heavy, familiar fur,
 A legacy from Uncle Shaye,
 With heavy sleeves, like bears,
 Sincere and faithful as a pillow.

In its deep pocket, I find your old glasses.
 They watch me philosophically
 and mutter irksomely:
 Oh, Kadya, Kadya,
 How tedious for you to loll beneath
 the fur
 And write those endless tales, each one
 a *khad-gadya*.

allegorical, just as *khad-gadya*, the name of a long Passover song, is also colloquial Yiddish for a tall or overly involved tale; “the gray householder” (*dem groym bale-bos*: “the gray proprietor” might have been better) is God; the literary efforts that her father’s glasses chide her for seem to the poet crude and pretentious next to the prosaic eloquence of a field, a Hebrew inscription on a tombstone (perhaps her father’s), or the rumble of a train (perhaps taking her away from Eastern Europe); and the glasses themselves, used to read the sacred books of Judaism, remain a permanent reproach in their coat that the poet is too small to fill and can only “loll beneath” (the Yiddish verb *valgern* has the deprecatory sense of “to sprawl



Adrienne Rich, Kadya Molodowsky, John Hollander, 1969

And believe me, all those poems will
 not supply
 What the white gravestone says to the
 blue sky,
 And about what green spring grasses
 chatter
 With the old gardener, the gray
 householder.
 And not even how the song of the racing
 train
 Quarrels with the footsteps of the poor
 man.

I saw — the glasses have vanished on
 paths high and far,
 So I crept up to my ears beneath the fur.
 But even there, in the hidden quietness,
 I hear the constant buzz of father’s old
 glasses.

The coat, while real enough, is also

around in”).

The Jewish God and the Jewish father are deeply implicated in each other here. It is not so much that God is a projection of the father as it is that it is the father in Judaism who stands before God, especially in the eyes of a girl who cannot become the father when she grows up or perform the religious commandments that are a male prerogative. Yet with a sullied sense of sexuality, and childless in her own marriage, neither could Molodowsky become the mother, one of whose few ritual preserves is the lighting of the Sabbath candles, the most religiously poignant moment of a Jewish woman’s week. One of a series of “Women-Poems” published in Molodowsky’s first collection, *Night of Heshvan* (1927), goes:

I will come to the one

Who first brought me woman's delight,
 And say: Man,
 I trusted someone else with my quiet gaze,
 And one night laid my head down
 near him.
 Now I bring my sorrow
 Like bees stinging around my heart,
 And have no honey to soothe the hurt.
 And when my man takes me by the braid,
 I will drop to my knees
 And remain on the doorkill like the
 petrification of Sodom.
 I will raise my hands to my head
 As my mother used to, blessing the
 candles,
 But my fingers will stand up like
 ten numbered sins.

Although Hellerstein's translation of the Yiddish word *man* as "husband" is biographically tenable (Molodowsky was married in 1921 to a man with whom she lived until his death in 1974, a year before her own), this poem strikes me as being rather about the betrayal of a husband or first love with a more sexually aggressive and satisfying partner, and I have accordingly taken the liberty, in lines three and nine, of re-translating *man* as "man," a meaning it can also have. In either case, her fingers, negatives of the Ten Commandments, held before her eyes as in candle lighting, the poet looks back frozen with contrition like Lot's wife. And in a poem from *Freydke*, "When Nobody Calls Me," we read:

My mother does not call me by name—
 Because my mother is dead.
 My father does not call me by name—
 Because my father is gone.
 And God does not call me by name—
 Because God plays at a Purim
 masquerade,
 He's disguised himself as a dog
 And mourns [or "wails"] loudly in the
 night.
 I beat him off with a stick.

THESE LINES WERE written in the 1930s, as Hitler's shadow spread over Europe and its Jews. From this point on Molodowsky watches fearfully and then devastatedly from New York, the elegiac note deepening as exile from childhood, the eclipse of God, and the annihilation of European Jewry merge in a single immense loss. But is the God-dog a wild beast unleashed upon the world or a poor, begging stray deserted by humanity? And is God in reality dead like the poet's parents, or will he revert to being God when the mummer's play of the *purim shpiel*, the "Purim masquerade," is over? The poem is ambiguous.

It had to be ambiguous, if Molodowsky

was to do in it what she later did in much of the verse that she wrote during and after the Holocaust—poetry in which she conducted her argument with Judaism in the vocabulary and the imagery of Judaism, turning the world of her childhood against itself so as to attack it bitterly and defend it desperately at the same time. It is in these poems that she both attains her greatest force and, paradoxically, almost disappears in a Jewish tradition as old as Abraham and Moses, as when she writes in 1945:

Merciful God,
 Choose another people,
 Elect another.
 We are tired of death and dying.
 We have no more prayers.
 Choose another people.

"Sacred parody" is the term, borrowed from David Roskies, by which Hellerstein describes the rhetorical strategy that sets God on his throne only in order to knock him off it, yet knocks him off it only in order to have set him on it; and while I am not sure that "parody" is the right word for something so anguished, Hellerstein puts it well when she observes that "the poem affirms even as it subverts. Although the prayer darkens into a curse of the deity to whom it is addressed, it

confirms, albeit with much ambivalence, a yearning and desire to believe in God as a presence who can still be addressed." In striking such a pose, Molodowsky was responding to the Holocaust in much the same way as other prominent Jewish writers such as Jacob Glatstein, Uri Tsvi Greenberg, and Elie Wiesel.

Hellerstein observes in a tone approaching disappointment that this response to "the historical trauma of the Holocaust... by identifying with the 'universal' and the 'mainstream' [in the Jewish cultural tradition], which has a male-identified voice," is also characterized by "the absence of an explicitly feminist voice in the poems Molodowsky wrote after her emigration to America." Yet setting aside the silly judgment that not being "feminist," as opposed to merely feminine (which Molodowsky always is), is something for which a woman poet or her admirers need apologize, there is scant evidence of "feminism" in Molodowsky's European period, too. Its verse often speaks of suffering as a woman, but only in the same sense that a man suffers as a man (the strongest influence on it, as far as my ear can make out, is Rilke—of all great modern male poets the one most sympathetic to women); and from the start Molodowsky had the intellectual and emotional maturity to realize that the

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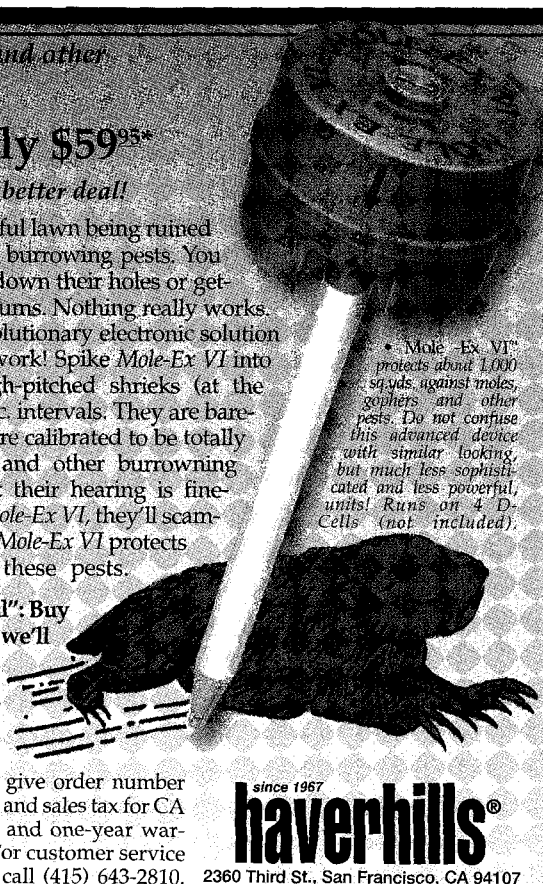
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problem with Judaism was not that it excluded women, but that a modern sensibility excluded it. Perhaps she was helped to this realization by the fact that she was a Hebrew teacher and had full access to the language of tradition in a way that few women of her generation did; and perhaps being given this indispensable tool of a male Jewish education made her feel an equal among equals. In any case, there is no anger or resentment in her sense of incompleteness, just the sadness of knowing, like Milton's Satan, that there is no way in which "I could repent and could obtaine/By Act of Grace my former state."

IT WOULD BE unfair to stress this sadness too much. There are rents in it everywhere through which glow a strong love of life, a shrewd sense of humor, a shy self-appreciation; a happier voice announcing, "I am a woman/ And smile often, like the moon/for no reason"; a louder voice declaiming from the top of the Empire State Building while a construction worker shouts nearby, "New York is all light,/It is sunny white,/ It is sky-green—/Mister Joe interrupted the words of the poet:—Max, my machine!"; a more comforting voice that lullabies:

My father calls to me
And says to me, Child.
And all the burdens fall away.
The white night of love
Is in me—
I am at the gate
Of Paradise.

Molodowsky's children's verse can be marvelously zany; in it she recaptured not just the freedom of childhood but also its giggles. And in some of her late poems she does a striking thing, using the rhythms and diction of the children's verse in such a way that we are no longer sure through whose eyes we are seeing, those of childish faith at life's start gently smiled at, or—her rondel completed—adult faith regained at life's end. A poem entitled "Angels Arrive In Jerusalem," written during a three-year stay in the new state of Israel in the early 1950s, and alluding in its refrain to the prophet Ezekiel's stupendous vision of national resurrection, begins in my own translation:

Angels arrive in Jerusalem.
They open Jewish doors and step inside.
They teach the children love of Torah,
They teach silent knowing,
Teach how to provide.

Every day they arrive,
Every day they arrive,

They arrive until all the dry bones
come alive.

Angels arrive in Jerusalem.
They arrive on a still unpaved road.
They carry the sand,
They carry the stone,
They help God-bestirred Jews bear
the load.

Every day they arrive,
Every day they arrive,
They arrive until all the dry bones
come alive.

*S'kumt yedn tog ayner,
S'kumt yedn tog ayner,
Biz s'veln dervakhn di trukene
bayner. ■*

The Visible Hand

By CHARLES LARMORE

Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment by Charles L. Griswold Jr.

(Cambridge University Press, 448 pp., \$59.95)

"WE SYMPATHIZE even with the dead," observed Adam Smith, to suggest how deeply our lives are ruled by the imagination. How miserable it must be, or so we imagine, no longer to see the light of the sun, and to be cut off from the pleasures of love and friendship. It seems indeed a duty to sympathize with their misfortune, now that the departed are in danger of being forgotten by the living. And recognizing that they are hardly in a position to enjoy our compassion only adds to the sense of their calamity. Our concern, as Smith noted, is clearly founded on an illusion, since not only we, but the dead too (so far as we can know), have no idea of what it is like to be dead. They cannot feel the misery that we feel must be theirs. And yet, Smith continues, sympathy with the dead is a very useful element in our mental economy, its illusory character notwithstanding, for the dread of death impels us to take greater care of our own lives.

Sometimes the imagination acts to trick us, but in Smith's eyes its operations run more deeply to make us the very beings we are. Our relations with others, our quest for knowledge and our pursuit of wealth, and even our conception of self would be nothing without it. In essence, the imagination, in Smith's account, amounts to the mind's love of order, its tendency to move at ease among ideas that

hang together. When the unexpected sets our ideas ajar, we try to imagine ways to recast our experience in a coherent mold. In this way the imagination fuels our speculation about the natural world. (Smith wrote some interesting essays on the history of astronomy and physics from ancient to modern times.)

Smith's paramount concern, of course, was the role of the imagination in social life. In society, one mind runs up against another, and to smooth over this sort of obstruction in the flow of experience, we exercise our imagination in a special way. We try to see the world from the other's point of view. And as Charles Griswold's pathbreaking book explains, this conception of social life in its debt to the imagination inspired the work in economics and ethics for which Smith is remembered today.

German scholars of the nineteenth century missed the significance of the imagination when they formulated the notorious "Adam Smith problem." How, they asked, could the perspectives of his two great works, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), have been supposed to form a coherent whole? How could the Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow have gone on to write the book that launched the modern science of economics? Smith's first book begins by claiming that "how selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortune of others and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing

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from it except the pleasure of seeing it." Yet his second book takes off from the famous observation that "it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." Which, then, was the primary motive of human action, sympathy or self-interest? Neither of Smith's books refers to the other.

SOME HAVE CONCLUDED that Smith could not make up his mind, or that he changed his mind in the intervening decades. In fact, Smith's two works are far from irreconcilable. One sign of their inner unity is Smith's readiness to combine economic analysis with moral judgment. Smith was not a practitioner of value-free social science. The corruption of character, the greed and the vanity excited by commercial society, was his constant preoccupation in *The Wealth of Nations*; and so was the torpor of mind, the intellectual narrowness, that the increasing specialization of tasks in a capitalist economy tends to produce in the laboring classes. Arguing for a system of compulsory public education to counter this dehumanization, Smith scarcely conformed to the image that posterity has fashioned of the great libertarian champion of the night-watchman state. Government, he believed, has more to do than tend to the national defense and provide the public works (such as a network of roads) necessary for commerce.

To be sure, the political ideal of *The Wealth of Nations* is the "obvious and simple system of natural liberty" in which "every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way." But the proviso turns out to be far from insignificant. As Smith explained, justice requires not only the protection of property, but also "the protection of every member of the society from the oppression of every other member of it." The dangers of domination diminish as citizens acquire the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic—as they learn, despite the deadening effects of their work, to think in some measure for themselves.

As everyone knows, Smith also relished pointing out that state action can prove counterproductive. It gives power to administrators who have limited knowledge and develop their own special interests, so that on balance their intervention can prove more harmful than good. Any statesman or legislature trying to steer private investment in the direction of the general welfare would, in Smith's view, probably make society worse rather than better. Individuals pursuing their own

interest know better the local possibilities for profit than government ever can know them; and the combined, if unintended, effect of their actions will be a greater prosperity than anyone could bring about by planning—and without the dangerous concentration of power in government hands.

Yet even Smith's fondness for the "invisible hand" was but one more way of joining economic analysis to moral argument. For him, economics was a fundamentally moral science, devoted to the betterment of the human condition. For this reason alone, *The Wealth of Nations* and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* belong to a single project, and there is no "Adam Smith problem." But Griswold shows that the real unity of Smith's thought lies at a deeper level. There was something more significant than the synthesis of economics and ethics in Smith's thought, and it was the conception of man upon which his economic thinking and his moral thinking was based.

WE ARE CREATURES of the imagination, Smith believed, for we live inescapably through the eyes of others. The pursuit of individual advantage, no less than the impulse to fellow-feeling, turns on the imaginative identification with others. Once basic needs are satisfied, our notion of our own good is inseparable from the approval that we expect to enjoy from others whose opinion we esteem. Sometimes, indeed, their approval represents no higher value; it is simply their admiration that we seek. Then our lives are driven by vanity, and such was Smith's diagnosis of the pursuit of wealth. "It is chiefly from regard to the sentiments of mankind," he wrote, "that we pursue riches and avoid poverty... To be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency, and approbation, are all the advantages which we can propose to derive from it." Here as elsewhere, the imagination is the engine of social life.

The Wealth of Nations itself gives scant attention to the psychological mechanisms involved in the pursuit of self-interest, being more concerned to explore its effects, particularly the unintended consequences to which it can lead. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* offers a deeper insight into Smith's view of man; but it does not do so by suggesting that we are more benevolent beings than his economic theory makes us out to be. It is the better guide, because it charts all the different ways in which we live through the eyes of others.

Griswold's study allows us to see how important a part Smith played in one of the most fundamental conceptual shifts

of the eighteenth century. As the Enlightenment wore on, the imagination came to be seen as something more than "decaying sense" (as Hobbes had called it), providing us with after-images of the things we have perceived; and also as something more than the faculty of make-believe, by which we fancy things that have never existed. Our very experience of the world was recognized to be the work of the imagination. For the mind does not simply register what it is given. It constructs its picture of reality. In his own development of this theme, Smith certainly learned from his friend Hume, but he also went well beyond him. More than Hume, more even than Kant and the later Romantics who also exalted the mind's creative powers, it was Smith who was the great theoretician of the imagination's role in the construction of social reality.

SMITH EXPLORED THE numerous ways in which our lives take shape by virtue of imagining how the world must look from another's point of view. In whatever we do, we pattern ourselves on others, for we act with an eye to the approval we want from people, real or invented, whom we regard as exemplary. Only in this way can we suppose that we are right to do as we are doing. "Whatever judgment we can form concerning our own sentiments and motives," Smith wrote, "must always bear some secret reference, either to what are, or to what, upon a certain condition, would be, or to what, we imagine, ought to be the judgment of others." The notion of a solitary man in the state of nature is not merely a fiction; it is the notion of a being utterly different from anything resembling humanity. We have no sense of who we are except by imagining how others would view us. As Griswold aptly puts Smith's point, "to see oneself as a human self is to see oneself being seen."

It is not solely in acting, however, that we assume the viewpoint of another. Our social nature equally involves attending to what others do; and to understand and judge their actions we must try to see their situation as they do. It is to explain this dimension of social life that Smith introduces his master concept of sympathy. In his hands, the concept of sympathy proves problematic in several regards. He means by it more than one thing, and he describes its operation in different ways, and he seems uncertain about how far its reach extends. Primarily, though, sympathy for Smith is our ability to understand others by seeing things as they do. We grasp the meaning of another's action by placing ourselves in his situation and imagining how, given his beliefs and

desires, we might feel impelled to do what he is doing.

Sometimes this elementary form of sympathy slides naturally into a deeper identification, when we think that we would ourselves have felt and done the same in that situation. In such cases, we "sympathize" with the other, in the usual sense of the term, and feel for his success or failure, happiness or distress. Smith is ambiguous about how this fellow-feeling operates. Do we actually feel, at a remove and so less intensely, what the other person felt? Or does our sympathy express an attitude toward his feeling, so that our own feelings are of a qualitatively different sort?

SMITH SAYS BOTH at different times. But surely the second is the better account, for when we rejoice at our friend's happiness, our joy is not a milder version of his own. Our happiness is *for* his happiness, as our friend's typically is not. Fellow-feeling is not some sort of contagious feeling, spreading from the other to ourselves. Essentially, it entails an approval or an endorsement of the other, and the feelings that it contains all embody this judgment. After all, we never lose our sense of being a self distinct from the other, however much we may sympathize.

For just this reason, as Smith points out, fellow-feeling comes with greater ease in some cases than in others. It comes more readily when the person's experience is pleasurable rather than painful, or when we have already experienced in our own lives the same sort of thing. Strange rites and idiosyncratic tastes are likely to leave us cold. To the outsider, a lover's dotting passion must itself appear a bit ridiculous, out of all proportion to the real merits of its object. It strikes a chord in us only when we remember having been similarly captivated ourselves. As a rule, special interests are likely to evoke active sympathy only in those who have them too. Just as "a lover may be good company to his mistress, though to nobody else," so, Smith remarks (with a glance at his own case), "a philosopher is company to a philosopher only; the member of a club to his own little knot of companions." Our direct identification with others tends to remain within the orbit of our own point of view.

Smith's aim in exploring the limits of fellow-feeling was to lay bare the difficulties of social harmony. Where mutual sympathy fails, conflict can arise. As Griswold observes, Smith shared with many modern thinkers an acute appreciation of the potential for social division. He, too, believed that the point of morality is not so much human perfection as the con-

struction of a way of living together. Morality, he argues in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, operates by redirecting our ability to imagine ourselves in another's position. Though liable to fall short if geared to feeling simply what others feel, the imagination can broaden the range of our solidarity when channeled onto a more abstract plane. Of course, in one regard, moral judgment cuts down on our willingness to sympathize with the views of others. When Mary slugs Bill in the face, after he has carelessly stepped on her sore toe, the thought that she reacted wrongly keeps us from feeling that we would have done the same. Still, on the whole, morality expands our sympathy, for it requires, so Smith maintains, that we take up the perspective of an "impartial spectator."

Miraculous Panoptic Precipitations

Rained milk and blood during the courtship
 Rained flesh
 And no flesh left unplundered by birds went bad
 Rained tiny biting mouths
 High on the hill of in-cries rained pennies neverending
 Rained brickwork breaking up in barrowfulls
 Changing the course of rivers
 Rained iron in the form of sponges rained
 Virgin wool round the stronghold
 A dark age drew it down
 Rained a stone from the sun which is itself
 A stone the blue lords
 Over us rained bluest at the tail of sleep
 Into a gaudy bird bath
 Had spilled pluperfect on the sea
 If an ocean were up there, you'd tilt your eyes at it and hiss
 Rained hexes rained
 Where the counter-drag downs you
 Snake arrows rained on bears
 In the spirit of panspermia rained
 Seeds in your baffled ear once
 Rained though your kind had died out
 Rained sirens splitting the night in two
 The consul pleaded a case of raining maidenteeth
 So that you had to take things out of yourself:
 Plans for a little canoe spilled saliva
 In a goodly spot rained clouds set on fire
 Rained blood raining up into our faces
 Poured sparks and wet stars
 Loaded the land
 With what it forgot rained
 Wildernesses of paint then
 Rained muddy staffage in gorges
 By engorged waters which made the century
 Unmade raining so as not to retain
 Rained to keep having to say in abeyance
 To keep pointing upward
 Pointing hand come down you're chosen to rain now rain

Christine Hume

This "demigod within the breast" is not the point of view of any actually existing person, but a point of view that we construct ourselves. Noting how our ability to sympathize with others is limited by our own experiences and interests, we try to imagine how the world of human action would look to someone unencumbered by these limitations. We conceive the idea of a spectator at once sympathetic but impartial, detached from the differences that set people at odds with one another, yet not so detached from human concerns as to be indifferent toward them. To the extent that I take my bearings from this moral point of view, "I divide myself, as it were, in two persons" and live by conscience. And to the extent that we all do so, we have devised a common perspective in which we share. Not only can we

sympathize with one another as moral agents, we can also sympathize with one another as the objects of moral concern.

To be sure, conforming our thoughts and our feelings to so abstract a model is no easy task. It requires training and social reinforcement—which is to say, once again, it requires seeing things as others do. We learn how to view the world as an impartial spectator would view it, by heeding the example of those around us who view the world in that way. For Smith, morality is therefore a point of view that we develop more as members of society than as separate individuals. In large part, conscience amounts to “society within.”

GRISWOLD EXPRESSES considerable enthusiasm for Smith’s account. One point in its favor, he argues, is its metaphysical economy. Morality being a point of view that we (collectively) build up ourselves, we need not suppose that there exists an independent order of right and wrong that we are trying to mirror. After all, one might wonder, how could there exist “moral facts” in addition to the facts which the various sciences investigate? For Smith, the proper standards of moral judgment are simply the ones that we imagine an impartial spectator using, not the ones that we speculate that such a spectator would be well-equipped to discover. In ordinary life, people may believe that our moral judgments answer to the way things really are, morally speaking. But in this belief Smith only saw, as Hume had put it, the mind’s “great propensity to spread itself on external objects.”

Another supposed plus of Smith’s theory is that it avoids the over-rationalized picture of impartiality that Kant’s ethics demands. Morality does not require us to distance ourselves from our emotions, and to regard them as mere inclinations, always potentially at odds with what reason commands. Morality consists, rather, in the refinement of our emotions, for it shapes our fellow-feeling to match the sentiments that we imagine an impartial spectator would feel. To evaluate a person’s action, we must put ourselves in the position of all those who have been affected by it. We must also see to what extent we can feel sympathy for the agent’s motives, since to that element, too, no impartial spectator would be indifferent.

Still, significant drawbacks lurk behind the advantages that Griswold applauds. Smith never made clear the character of the principles that an impartial spectator would deploy. Certainly he rejected the notion of Francis Hutcheson, his teacher at the University of Glasgow, that all the virtues may be reduced to different forms

of universal benevolence. By attending only to the consequences of action, utilitarian theories were, in his view, too simplistic: they slight the importance of “propriety,” the fittingness of an action to its circumstances, that we also value in virtues such as temperance and courage. Both utility and propriety need to be taken into account; but the principles by which the impartial spectator would weigh them together are left obscure. Had Smith understood the impartial spectator as someone well-placed to discern the correct principles of morality, he could hardly have afforded to say so little about the matter. Imagining instead the impartial spectator as the very author of their validity, he found it easy to say no more than that correct judgment is the judgment the impartial spectator would express.

CONCEPTIONS OF MORALITY such as Smith’s, which view moral right and wrong as a distinction of our own making, need not fall victim to this sort of circularity. Still, they have to lay out some specific procedure whereby we construct such a distinction. On this score, too, Smith’s theory is deficient. We enlarge our fellow-feeling, he argues, by steering it in the directions in which we imagine an impartial spectator’s sympathy would flow. Yet he adds that impartiality does not require that we jettison the special affection we naturally feel for family and friends. “The man who should feel no more for the death or distress of his own father or son than for those of any other man’s father or son, would appear neither a good son or a good father.” For Smith, the Stoic wish to be a citizen of the world was an extravagant fantasy, and not at all a proper part of the ideal of impartiality. Probably he was right. But how do we determine the extent to which we may legitimately prefer the good of our loved ones to that of all mankind? And, more worrisome still, if impartiality, properly understood, allows us to favor them, why does it not entitle us to be just as partial to the interests of our sect or our race? Smith never says. And precisely because he takes his moral bearings from the emotions, letting the scope of morality be determined by our capacity for fellow-feeling rather than by reasoning about principles, he can have nothing to say to settle these questions.

Morality was supposed to lay the basis for bridging our differences. In Smith’s hands, however, morality looks destined to be the continuation of war by other means. He cannot explain what has gone wrong, if people in the light of their different allegiances draw up opposing ideals of “impartiality” and moralize about the ignorance or the turpitude of their adver-

saries. Smith always referred to the impartial spectator in the singular, but he leaves the door open to each social group fashioning its own.

Griswold rightly notes that modern moral philosophy has been haunted by the fear of being unable to handle the potential for social fragmentation it sees all around. Yet he is far too sanguine about the ability of a theory such as Smith’s to contribute much to the solution of this “crisis of the Enlightenment.” Feelings are a very fickle guide. And the idea that we are the creators of right and wrong seems itself a recipe for fomenting moral discord. Why should we heed some device (such as the idea of an impartial spectator) for constructing moral distinctions, unless we suppose, contrary to its explaining the whole of morality, that it ought indeed to command our respect? If basic moral principles are not already in place to shape the ones that we do create, what reason can we have to resist setting up different moralities of our own design?

A minor temptation, Smith might reply, in the everyday world where people believe in the independence of moral distinctions. But this everyday world is a world of illusion that his philosopher transcends. Griswold oddly sees in Smith a champion of the true Enlightenment, who reconciled philosophy with ordinary life. In reality, Smith drove a wedge between the two, putting the enlightened elite in an inherently manipulative relation to the many.

AND THERE IS a final worry. Did Smith finally have much of a grasp of what morality is really all about? For him, moral judgments acquire their meaning from the relation between actor and spectator. One person acts and another person looks on, feeling sympathy for the agent or for others affected by the action. As Griswold points out, Smith saw all the world as a stage, a theater in which we continually shift between acting with an eye to what others will think of us, and observing what others are doing. No doubt much of social life is like that.

But is the fundamental moral situation one of looking and being looked at? Not at all. We come to understand the point of morality when we realize that respecting another as a person is part and parcel of our own sense of ourselves as persons deserving of respect. Morality does not arise from the asymmetry of actor and spectator. It revolves instead around the symmetry of mutual recognition. The paradigmatic moral relation is not one person sympathetically observing another, but two people talking together, each speaking to the other as a person equally entitled to speak. ■

WASHINGTON DIARIST

In Knots

THIS SUMMER, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY's National Marriage Project released its latest study on the state of matrimony in America, and the results were alarming. Not only are about half of all marriages still likely to end in divorce, but couples are less and less likely to get married in the first place: from 1970 to 1996, the number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried women decreased by more than one-third. And the median age for a woman's first marriage has moved steadily upward from 20 in 1960 to its current high of 25—a sign, the authors of the study argue, of young women's growing pessimism about finding Mr. Right.

LOOKING AT SUCH STATISTICS, ONE might plausibly assume that the bridal industry is in dire straits. Bridal gown manufacturers, surely, must be going out of business across the nation; hotel ballrooms must be languishing unused; wedding crooners must be singing for their suppers on the street. One might plausibly assume all this, that is, if one were not personally involved in planning a wedding. The poor soul who *is* so involved, however, is forced to wonder what planet the National Marriage Project's numbers could possibly have come from—and whether any florists are available there.

INDEED, IF THE PROLIFERATION OF wedding “vendors” (a catch-all term for the caterers, florists, photographers, musicians, and miscellaneous other professionals indispensable to any serious wedding) and the amount of time in advance that these various and sundry vendors must be booked are reliable indicators, the wedding business is in the midst of an economic boom. When my fiancé and I began planning our December wedding last April, we shocked friends, family, and hotel catering managers alike with the news that we had allotted ourselves an eight-month timetable. In New York, it seems, high-status reception sites such as Central Park's Loeb Boathouse—which can cost upwards of \$40,000 to rent for the evening—are booked more than a year in advance. Even in my hometown of Baltimore, a comparative backwater, many sites were already taken by the time we started calling.

BUT FINDING A PLACE TO HOLD THE wedding is only the beginning. When I tried to get an appointment at Kleinfeld's, a saleswoman at the venerable Brooklyn bridal gown shop offered me a date more than a month away. Since many companies require you to order your dress six months in advance, this left me about a week for shopping. But when I expressed my dismay, the saleswoman was unsympathetic. After all, I hadn't followed the proper procedure. It's really better to start looking for a wedding dress *before* you get engaged, she chided.

OF COURSE, MY FIANCÉ AND I WERE hardly left to fend for ourselves. Within days of announcing our engagement, we were inundated with advice, books, and, worst of all, magazines sent by well-meaning friends and relatives. My future sister-in-law gave me *Emily Post on Weddings* and the most recent issue of every bridal magazine. My mother produced a guide to invitation selection and wording published (rather synergistically) by the Crane's stationery company. And my stepmother presented us with a stack of *Martha Stewart Living* wedding issues that could have doubled as a weight-training device. Within moments of sitting down with these publications, it became clear that they were bound to produce far more stress than they would relieve. After absorbing one magazine's strict injunctions on such topics as the number of saucupans to register for and which varieties of flowers hold up best in bouquets, I would move on to another mag, only to find an equal number of equally dogmatic assertions, delivered with equal certainty and often in complete contradiction with the first set.

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT, IN THIS postfeminist day and age, women still subscribe to such nonsense. But they do, quite literally, and in large numbers: *Bride's* alone has an average circulation of more than 400,000. Nonetheless, in recent years there has been something of a backlash against the “traditional” way of planning and executing a wedding. One website, theknot.com, created in 1996, bills itself as the place where “smart, spirited, and sophisticated couples turn for up-to-date, comprehensive wedding information,” and it does address issues Emily Post never dealt with—such as whether it's OK for your dog to escort you down the aisle (answer: yes) or what style of dress best flatters the figure of a pregnant bride.

STILL, ON CLOSER INSPECTION, THIS so-called backlash is hardly a backlash at all. It is a reaction against only the specifics

of the various directives that characterize the wedding industry, not against their underlying assumption: that there are certain procedures involved in planning a wedding, and they must be followed. The most radical piece of advice offered on theknot.com, for instance, is that it's fine to wear white at a second marriage.

SO WHY DO SO MANY BRIDES-TO-BE—myself included—succumb to this brainwashing and become convinced that disaster will befall us if we don't follow the directions? Because, as we were all reminded by the National Marriage Project, statistically speaking, marital disaster is fairly likely. Is the question of whether the marriage will last not implicit in the mind of every person who attends a wedding? In fact, it requires a considerable degree of optimism—or arrogance—to be able to believe, in the face of such statistics, that one's own marriage will be different. And here's where the magazines come in. Through the numbing repetition of one happy, white-clad bride after another, they manage to convey the message that if we combine all the necessary ingredients—dress, caterer, photographer, band, florist—a successful wedding and, by extension, marriage will ensue. In short, if we follow all of their step-by-step instructions, we will turn into the kind of bride they feature. And those brides' marriages never end in divorce.

BUT, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THE wedding magazines are even shrewder than they first appear to be. What with all the fuss over the cake and the flowers, they make it easy to overlook the one aspect of getting married that people actually do need help with: the marriage. Perhaps the magazines apply the principle of planned obsolescence to marriage, as if it were a cheap stereo whose parts coincidentally wear out just after the warranty expires. After all, if cars and computers aren't built to last, why should diamonds be forever? Before you know it, your wedding day has come and gone, and the two of you will have spent so much time obsessing about your china pattern that you've yet to get around to the really important stuff, such as public versus private schooling or how you're sure you can be monogamous for the rest of your lives. And, sooner or later, the disagreements may start piling up and you'll decide to call it quits. But by and by, of course, you'll likely feel the need to order a replacement—and send a new influx of dollars into the wedding industry. If you start now, there will be plenty of time to plan your next wedding. You can even wear white again.

RUTH HALIKMAN



COMMENTARY THAT HITS

BELOW THE BELTWAY

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